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MISCELLANIES

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

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To T. J. L.
From his old friend
D. W.

Xmas, 1901.

MISCELLANIES

MISCELLANIES

BY

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

HONORARY FELLOW OF TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE

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PREFATORY MOTTOES

PEACE be with the soul of that charitable and courteous author who, for the common benefit of his fellow-authors, introduced the ingenious way of miscellaneous writing.

LORD SHAFTESBURY.

I am willing to flatter myself with hopes that, by collecting these papers, I am not preparing for my future life either shame or repentance.

DR. JOHNSON.

Just so is our life: it is too short to serve the ambition of a haughty prince or an usurping rebel; too little time to purchase great wealth, to satisfy the pride of a vain-glorious fool, to trample upon all the enemies of our just or unjust interest; but for the obtaining virtue, for the purchase of sobriety and modesty, for the actions of religion, God gave us time sufficient.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

Were men so enlightened and studious of their own good as to act by the dictates of their reason

and reflection, and not the opinion of others, conscience *would be the steady ruler of human life, and the words, truth, law, reason, equity, and religion, would be but synonymous terms for that only guide which makes us pass our days in our own favour and approbation.*

Sir Richard Steele.

Our province is virtue and religion, life and manners; the science of improving the temper and making the heart better. This is the field assigned to us to cultivate; how much it has lain neglected is indeed astonishing.

Bishop Butler.

Every age seems to have its favourite pursuits which serve to amuse the idle and relieve the attention of the industrious. Happy the man who is born excellent in the pursuit in vogue, and whose genius seems adapted to the time he lives in.

Oliver Goldsmith.

Some kinds of criticism are much too insipid as others are too pragmatical. It is not easy to combine point with solidity, spirit with moderation and candour. Many people see nothing but beauties in a work, others nothing but defects. Those *cloy you with sweets, and are 'the very milk of human kindness,' flowing on in a stream of luscious panegyrics;* these *take delight in poisoning the sources of your satisfaction and*

putting you out of conceit with nearly every author that comes in their way.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

If you wish to judge of a man's character and nature, you have only to find out what he thinks laughable.

FREDERICK LOCKER.

I have learnt from experience that many false opinions may be exchanged for true ones without in the least altering the habits of mind, of which false opinions are the result.

J. S. MILL.

Who knows whereabouts we are in the duration of the race? Is humanity crawling out of the cradle, or tottering into the grave? Is it in nursery, in schoolroom, or in opening manhood? Who knows?

J. A. FROUDE.

The idealist is incorrigible. If cast out of his heaven, he makes an ideal out of hell. One may disillusion him, and forthwith he embraces the disillusionment no less ardently than he previously embraced his hope.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE.

The beauty of a work lies in the philosophy it contains.

ERNEST RENAN.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

TWO of the papers here reprinted, *Wesley* and *Froude*, have appeared in *Scribner's Magazine;* two, the one on *Taste in Books* and the other on the *House of Commons*, in the *Cornhill Magazine;* the paper on *The Reformation* is reprinted from the *Nineteenth Century*, and the one on *Sir Robert Peel* is from the *Contemporary Review*. I thank the editors for their kind permission to make this use of the contributions in question.

A. B.

3, NEW SQUARE,
LINCOLN'S INN.

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I

JOHN WESLEY

SOME ASPECTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN ENGLAND

(1899)

It was a fortunate thing for historians, moralists, philosophers, and every other kind of bookmaker when it became the habit to chop up the annals of mankind into centuries. It is a meaningless division save for the purpose of counting, and yet such is our passion for generalization, so fond are we of distinguishing and differentiating, that we all of us have long ago endowed each one of the nineteen Christian centuries (to wander back no farther) with its own characteristics and attributes. These arbitrary divisions of time have thus become sober realities; they stalk majestically across the stage of

memory, they tread the boards each in its own garb, making appropriate gestures and uttering familiar catch-words. Lord Clarendon's history is not more unlike Gibbon's, Bishop Ken is not more unlike Bishop Hoadly, Prince Rupert is not more unlike John Churchill, than is the seventeenth century as we choose to depict it unlike the eighteenth. And yet full well do we know in the bottom of our hearts, those unpleasing depths where we seldom dredge for fear of the consequences, how impossible it is to compress into the lines of a single figure, however animated its countenance or mobile its features, the vast tide of human existence as it flows gigantically along regardless of methods of counting time.

The eighteenth century in England does not lack its historians and painters who have treated their great subject sometimes after a Pre-Raphaelite fashion, and sometimes after the manner of the impressionists. It has been loaded with abuse by picturesque historians and high-flying divines and romantic poets. Its political franchise was certainly restricted, while its civil list was unduly extended. It whitewashed its churches, and even sought to

rationalize its religion. No less emancipated an intelligence than Mark Pattison's pronounced the first half of the eighteenth century to be 'an age destitute of faith and 'earnestness—an age whose poetry was 'without romance, whose philosophy was 'without insight, and whose public men 'were without character.' Harsh words indeed, but not lightly written.

Yet when abandoning generalities and dwelling on the details of the time as it was then spent in England, it is difficult to reconcile all one's reading with any very sweeping assertions. It was a brutal age, no doubt—an age of the press-gang, of the whipping-post, of gaol-fever, and all the horrors of the criminal code; an ignorant age, when the population, lords and louts alike, drank with great freedom and reckoned cock-fighting among the more innocent joys of life; when education of the kind called popular, or, more correctly, primary—for popular it is not and never will be—was hardly thought of; a corrupt age, when offices and votes were bought and sold, and bishops owed their sees to the King's women.

Brutal, ignorant, and corrupt. That the eighteenth century in England was all this,

is it not written in the storied page of Hogarth? Charles Lamb quotes with critical approval the answer of the man who, when asked to name his favourite author, replied: 'Next to Shakespeare, Hogarth.' We all love a crowded gallery —people coming, going, incidents, emotions, passions evil as well as good, for there is nothing we cannot forgive humanity— and Hogarth's gallery teems with the life of the eighteenth century; catches, as only great painters can, its most evanescent glances, and records its desperate efforts to amuse itself or forget itself between two eternities. And though so true a humourist could not be oblivious of the kindly side of life or be without some gracious touches and affectionate portrayals, still, roughly speaking, the great historian of the eighteenth century in England affirms the brutal view of it, its cruelty, its horror. How people can frame Hogarth's prints and hang them up in their rooms is more than I can say.

But there are other authorities, other aspects, other books. Two of the catchwords of the eighteenth century are *sentimentality* and *enthusiasm*. The first of the

two is supposed to have been invented by the famous author of the *History of Clarissa Harlowe, a Series of Letters.* He it was, that little printer and warden of a city company, who first opened the rusty floodgates of English tears and taught the South Briton how to weep as he had never wept before. But it is with *enthusiasm* I would deal to-day. During the eighteenth century enthusiasm is a word of almost as frequent occurrence as either wit or parts. It has been pointed out by an ingenious friend of my own that Pope, in his *Essay on Criticism*, employs the word 'wit' forty-seven times and in at least seven different senses;* and as for 'parts,' though the word may be found in Sidney and Spenser, the eighteenth century made it peculiarly its own. But 'enthusiasm' is also a very frequent word. Lord Shaftesbury, the third Earl and the author of the *Characteristicks* before the century was in its teens, wrote his famous *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm*, in which he is supposed to have said: 'Ridicule is the test of truth.' He never said so anywhere in so many words, but he gets very near it in this letter in

* Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, edited by A. S. West. Cambridge University Press, 1896.

which he describes enthusiasm as one of the dangers of the age, a terrible distemper, almost as bad as the small-pox. In the opinion of my lord enthusiasm is a modification of the spleen, having its centre in an ill-regulated religion. True religion, in the opinion of that third Lord Shaftesbury, is based on good humour. He observes in his fashionable way: 'Tis in adversity 'chiefly or in ill-health, under affliction or 'disturbance of mind or discomposure of 'temper, that we have recourse to religion, 'though in reality we are never so unfit to 'think of it as at such a dark and heavy 'hour. We can never be fit to contemplate 'anything above us when we are in no 'condition to look into ourselves and 'calmly examine the temper of our own 'minds and passions, for then it is we see 'wrath and fury and revenge and terror in 'the Deity when we are full of disturbances 'and fears within, and have by suffering 'and anxiety lost so much of the natural 'calm and easiness of our temper.'

Thus did the infant century at the very outset of its journey meet, in the shape of this elegant peer, its Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, who, you will remember, in reply to Christian's distracted 'I know what I

'would obtain; it is ease for my heavy 'burden,' observes in the same sense as Shaftesbury, though in homelier language: 'But why wilt thou seek for ease in this 'way, seeing so many dangers attend it, 'especially since (hadst thou but patience 'to hear me) I could direct thee to the 'obtaining of what thou desirest, without 'the dangers that thou in this way wilt run 'thyself into—yea, and the remedy is at 'hand? Besides, I will add that instead 'of those dangers, thou shalt meet with 'much safety, friendship, and content.'

Why wilt thou seek for ease in this way when if you will only be good-humoured, sensible, and let the world wag, you will meet with much safety, friendship, and content?

All through the eighteenth century, from Lord Shaftesbury at the beginning to Bishop Lavington nearer its close, enthusiasm continued the *bête noire* of all those decent people who think that as God made the world He should be left alone to mend it. The inherent absurdity of enthusiasm seldom failed to illuminate the good-natured countenance of David Hume with a smile half a philosopher's and half a man of the world's, while it provoked a not

ill-natured sneer from Gibbon, who, though he wrote the history of the fall of the Roman Empire was taken quite by surprise, and, indeed, terribly put out, by the fall of the French monarchy in his own day. He, while referring to the author of *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, one of the most characteristic books of the eighteenth century, observes in that way of his so suggestive of a snug corner and a library chair: 'Had not Law's vigorous 'mind been clouded by enthusiasm, he 'might be ranked with the most agreeable 'and ingenious writers of his time.' Devoutness, holiness, the inward life, the flight from wrath to come, the horror of sin, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, raptures, transports, fancies, visions, voices —all these things and more are included in that word 'enthusiasm,' which is for ever cropping up in this eighteenth century, the reason being that the century was full of it, and during its years countless thousands of pilgrims not only played the fool in Vanity Fair and made beasts of themselves in Gin Lane, but with groans and trembling passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and caught glimpses of the towers and palaces of the city of God.

We have too few books which bring home to us in concrete form the lives and thoughts of our forefathers. Historians we know, good, bad, and indifferent, the learned but dull, the dull but conscientious, the picturesque but false; the historian who writes his history because he has a grudge against the Church of England, whose Orders he has renounced; his Anglican rival, who writes his because he resents as a personal affront the attitude of the Church of Rome to the English branch; the Nonconformist historian, who has his quarrel both with the Vatican and Lambeth, and is better read in his Calamy's *Nonconformist Memorial* than in his Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy*. They all have their value, these historians, and their vogue. Gladly do I give them place. But they none of them supply us with what we want. Suppose, for example, I want to be infected with the learning and the leisure of the eighteenth century: the generalizations of the regular historian are of no use to me. Their pages contain no microbes, distil no perfumes. If Mr. Austin Dobson's poems are by my side or his prose studies, they will for a brief season lay me low; but a resurrectionary *tour de*

force has never the reposeful air of Nature. For such a purpose as I have just indicated there is nothing quite so good as the seventeen volumes of Nichols' *Anecdotes and Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*. In a sense, and a very real sense, too, these portly tomes may be called utterly insignificant. They rarely recall a name of first-class importance or record a fact in itself worth mentioning. They force you to spend your time in the company of historians, not of empires, but of counties, of typographers, antiquaries, classical scholars, lettered divines, librarians at great houses, learned tradesmen (for such freaks existed in the eighteenth century); they tell you of lives wasted in colleges and country rectories; they remind you of forgotten controversies and foolish personal enmities; they are full of Latin epitaphs. And every now and again in your country wanderings the originals of these epitaphs will stare at you from some snug transept corner, or meet your eye as you wander westward down the nave of an abbey church or other old world burying-place. You will not be troubled with enthusiasm in Mr. Nichols' collections, but to read them is to live in the eighteenth century.

In sundry moods they will serve your turn well enough, but the reaction must come, when you will grow impatient of all this trifling, and demand to be quit of tiresome coteries and tenth-rate literature, and to be admitted into the life of the nation. Then, if you are wise, you will carefully replace Mr. Nichols on the shelf (for it is childish to knock books about, and the mood will recur), and take down *The Journal of the Reverend John Wesley, A.M., sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.*

John Wesley, born as he was in 1703, and dying as he did in 1791, covers as nearly as mortal man may the whole of the eighteenth century, of which he was one of the most typical figures, and certainly the most strenuous. He began his published Journal on October 14, 1735, and its last entry is under date Sunday, October 24, 1790, when in the morning he explained to a numerous congregation in Spitalfields Church 'The Whole Armour of God,' and in the afternoon enforced to a still larger audience in St. Paul's, Shadwell, the great truth, 'One thing is needful,' the last words of the Journal being: 'I hope

'many even then resolved to choose the 'better part.'

Between those two Octobers there lies the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned or endured. I do not know whether I am likely to have among my readers anyone who has ever contested an English or Scotch county in a Parliamentary Election since household suffrage. If I have, that tired soul will know how severe is the strain of its three weeks, and how impossible it seemed at the end of the first week that you should be able to keep it going for another fortnight, and how when the last night arrived you felt that had the strife been accidentally prolonged another seven days you must have perished by the wayside. Well, John Wesley contested the three kingdoms in the cause of Christ during a campaign which lasted forty years. He did it for the most part on horseback. He paid more turnpikes than any man who ever bestrode a beast. Eight thousand miles was his annual record for many a long year, during each of which he seldom preached less frequently than a thousand times. Had he but preserved his scores at all the inns where he lodged, they would have made by themselves a

history of prices. And throughout it all he never knew what depression of spirits meant, though he had much to try him—suits in Chancery and a jealous wife.

In the course of this unparalleled contest Wesley visited again and again the most out-of-the-way districts, the remotest corners of England—places which to-day lie far removed even from the searcher after the picturesque. Even in 1899, when the map of England looks like a gridiron of railways, none but the sturdiest of pedestrians, the most determined of cyclists, can retrace the steps of Wesley and his horse and stand by the rocks and the natural amphitheatres in Cornwall and Northumberland, in Lancashire and Berkshire, where he preached his Gospel to the heathen. Exertion so prolonged, enthusiasm so sustained, argues a remarkable man, while the organization he created, the system he founded, the view of life he promulgated, is still a great fact among us. No other name than Wesley's lies embalmed as his does. Yet he is not a popular figure. Our standard historians—save, indeed, Mr. Lecky—have dismissed him curtly. The fact is, Wesley puts your ordinary historian out of conceit with himself. How much easier to

weave into your page the gossip of Horace Walpole, to enliven it with a heartless jest of George Selwyn's, to make it blush with sad stories of the extravagance of Fox, to embroider it with the rhetoric of Burke, to humanize it with the talk of Johnson, to discuss the rise and fall of administrations, the growth and decay of the constitution, than to follow John Wesley into the streets of Bristol or on to the bleak moors near Burslem, where he met face to face in all their violence, all their ignorance, and all their generosity the living men, women, and children who made up the nation!

It has perhaps also to be admitted that to found great organizations is to build your tomb. A splendid tomb it may be, a veritable sarcophagus, but none the less a tomb. John Wesley's chapels lie a little heavily on John Wesley. Even so do the glories of Rome make us forgetful of the grave in Syria.

It has been said that Wesley's character lacks charm, that mighty antiseptic. It is not easy to define charm, which is not a catalogue of qualities, but a mixture. Let no one deny charm to Wesley who has not read his Journal. Southey's Life is a

dull, almost a stupid, book, which happily there is no need to read. Read the Journal, which is a book full of plots and plays and novels, which quivers with life, and is crammed full of character.

John Wesley came of a stock which had been much harassed and put about by our unhappy religious difficulties. Politics, business, and religion are the three things Englishmen are said to worry themselves about. The Wesleys early took up with religion. John Wesley's great-grandfather and grandfather were both ejected from their livings in 1662, and the grandfather was so bullied and oppressed by the Five Mile Act that he early gave up the ghost, whereupon his remains were refused what is called Christian burial, though a holier and more primitive man never drew breath. This poor persecuted spirit left two sons according to the flesh, Matthew and Samuel; and Samuel it was who in his turn became the father of John and Charles Wesley.

Samuel Wesley, though minded to share the lot, hard though that lot was, of his progenitors, had the moderation of mind, the Christian conservatism, perhaps even the disposition to Toryism, which marked

the family, and being sent to a Dissenting college, became disgusted with the ferocity and bigotry he happened there to encounter. Those were the days of the Calf's Head Club and feastings on the 29th of January, graceless meals for which Samuel Wesley had no stomach. His turn was for the things that are 'quiet, 'wise and good.' He departed from the Dissenting seminary, and in 1685 entered himself as a poor scholar at Exeter College, Oxford. He brought £2 6s. with him, and as for prospects, he had none. Exeter received him. During the eighteenth century our two Universities, famous despite their faults, were always open to the poor scholar who was ready to subscribe, not to boat clubs or cricket clubs, but to the Thirty-nine Articles. Three Archbishops of Canterbury during the eighteenth century were the sons of small tradesmen. There was, in fact, much less snobbery and money-worship during the century when the British Empire was being won than during the century when it is being talked about. Samuel Wesley was allowed to remain at Oxford, where he supported himself by devices known to his tribe, and when he left the University to be ordained he had

clear in his pouch, after discharging his few debts, £10 15s. He had thus made £7 19s. out of his University, and had his education, as it were, thrown in for nothing. He soon obtained a curacy in London, and married a daughter of the well-known ejected clergyman, Dr. Annesley, about whom you may read in another eighteenth-century book, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton.*

The mother of the Wesleys was a remarkable woman, though cast in a mould not much to our minds nowadays. She had nineteen children, and greatly prided herself on having taught them, one after another, by frequent chastisements, to—what do you think?—cry softly. She had theories of education, and strength of will and of arm, too, to carry them out. She knew Latin and Greek, and though a stern, forbidding, almost an unfeeling parent, she was successful in winning and retaining, not only the respect, but the affection of such of her huge family as lived to grow up. But out of the nineteen thirteen early succumbed. Infant mortality was one of the great facts of the eighteenth century, whose Rachels had to learn to cry softly over their dead babes.

The mother of the Wesleys thought more of her children's souls than of their bodies.

The revolution of 1688 threatened to disturb the early married life of Samuel Wesley and his spouse. The husband wrote a pamphlet in which he defended revolution principles, but the wife secretly adhered to the old cause; nor was it until a year before Dutch William's death that the Rector made the discovery that the wife of his bosom, who had sworn to obey him and regard him as her overlord, was not in the habit of saying 'Amen' to his fervent prayers on behalf of his suffering Sovereign. An explanation was demanded and the truth extracted, namely, that in the opinion of the Rector's wife her true King lived over the water. The Rector at once refused to live with Mrs. Wesley any longer until she recanted. This she refused to do, and for a twelvemonth the couple dwelt apart, when William III. having the good sense to die, a reconciliation became possible. If John Wesley was occasionally a little pig-headed, need one wonder? The story of the fire at Epworth Rectory and the miraculous escape of the infant John was once a tale as well known as Alfred in the neat-herd's

hut, and pictures of it still hang up in many a collier's home.

John Wesley received a sound classical education at Charterhouse and Christ Church, and remained all his life very much the scholar and the gentleman. No company was too good for John Wesley, and nobody knew better than he did that had he cared to carry his powerful intelligence, his flawless constitution, and his infinite capacity for taking pains into any of the markets of the world, he must have earned for himself place, fame, and fortune.

Coming, however, as he did of a theological stock, having a saint for a father and a notable devout woman for a mother, Wesley from his early days learned to regard religion as the business of his life, just as the younger Pitt came to regard the House of Commons as the future theatre of his actions. After a good deal of heart-searching and theological talk with his mother, Wesley was ordained a deacon by the excellent Potter, afterward Primate, but then (1725) Bishop of Oxford. In the following year Wesley was elected a Fellow of Lincoln, to the great delight of his father. 'Whatever I am,' said the good old man, 'my Jack is Fellow of Lincoln.'

In trying to form even a glimmering idea of the state of the Church of England in 1725, when Wesley took Orders, there are some incidents in its past history which must not be overlooked. I mean its repeated purgings. Evictions are, of course, of frequent occurrence in all Church histories, but the Church of England has been peculiarly unlucky in this respect. Let me, in a handful of sentences, recall the facts. I pass over the puzzling and unedifying events of King Henry VIII.'s time, the Protestant rule of his short-lived son, the frank Romanism of his eldest daughter, and begin with Elizabeth, who succeeded in November, 1558. Crowned though she was according to the Catholic ceremonial, including the unction and the Pontifical Mass, it appears to have been well understood by those in high place that England, having got a new master, must be prepared once more for new men and new measures. They were indeed strange times. Can it be that the country did not care about the continuity of its Church? The Act of Supremacy soon made its appearance, annexing to the Crown all jurisdictions, spiritual and ecclesiastical, for the visitation and reforma-

tion of the ecclesiastical state and persons, and of all errors, heresies, and schisms. The inevitable oath was directed to be taken under the usual penalties—first, loss of property, then loss of life. When Queen Mary died there were but fifteen Anglican Bishops alive. Of these, fourteen refused the oath, and were turned neck-and-crop out of their sees. They went away quickly enough, and disappeared into obscurity. Elizabeth called them a lazy set of scamps. We have no evidence that they were anything of the kind. Hardships and indignities were heaped upon them. Some died in prison, others in retirement; one or two escaped abroad. It seems to be the fact that they all died in their beds. They had no mind either to burn or hang. Jeremy Collier gives us, in addition to those fourteen prelates, a list of three bishops-elect, one abbot, one abbess, four priors, twelve deans, fourteen archdeacons, sixty canons, one hundred priests, all well preferred, fifteen heads of colleges, and about twenty doctors of both faculties—all what one may call stationary people hard to move, who were at this same time deprived of their places, profits, and dignities. It does not seem a great many out of the

nine thousand spiritual places in England. Still, to lose its whole hierarchy (except the Bishop of Llandaff) at one blow was a shrewd knock, nor, we may be sure, did the bishops-elect, the deans, the archdeacons and canons, the heads of houses and doctors of divinity, and the one hundred well-preferred priests go out without rendings of the heart and bitter reflections. There were no newspapers to record their emotions or to summarize their losses under the heading 'Crisis in the Church'; but we may be sure they were pious men, sick of shuffles and crowned heads, while of those who remained, who can tell with what uneasiness of mind, with what pangs of conscience, they did so?

This is Purge No. 1, and it got rid of the old Roman pietist; and let no man deny to the Church of Rome one of the notes of a true Church—the capacity to breed saints.

Purge No. 2 was numerically more important. Charles I. got into those difficulties which brought his comely head to the scaffold, and the beneficed clergy were made subject to visitation by order of the House of Commons and in large numbers turned adrift. That many of these clergy

were illiterate and unfit for their office is true enough, but in the teeth of the protests made by the best men among the Puritan party, other tests than those of learning and piety were imposed and enforced. Loyalty to the dead King, or malignancy as it was termed, was counted to be a disqualification for a country parson; a sour observance of Sunday was reckoned as piety, and many a good man who had earned and deserved the love of his parishioners was evicted to make way for a Presbyterian. How many parsons were turned out during the Commonwealth it is hard to say, but many hundreds there certainly were, and among them were numbered some of the very choicest spirits of the age.

Purge No. 3 is the one best known in Nonconformist circles. It occurred after the restoration of the Stuarts, when two thousand of the clergy, including a large number of the intruders of the Commonwealth, were turned out of their livings for refusing to take the oath required by the Act of Uniformity. The celebrated Richard Baxter (who refused a bishopric) tells us in his Life, which is one of the best books in existence, how these evicted tenants were

made up. The passage is too long to be here quoted, and it is enough to say that by this purge the Church of England lost a host of her clergy who had no objection to Bishops or to a Liturgy, who had never signed the Solemn League and Covenant, who had been against the Civil War, but who were unwilling, because unable, to give their unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer. But they had to go. They were devout, they were learned, they were peaceful, they were sensible. It mattered not; out they went like Wesley's own grandfather, and were hunted from place to place like wolves.

Purge No. 4 has still to be endured. The Stuarts ran their destined course. The blessed restoration was in less than thirty years succeeded by the glorious revolution, and a fresh oath had, of course, to be invented as a burden upon the conscience of the established clergy. It was in form simple enough: 'I, A. B., do 'sincerely promise and swear to bear true 'allegiance to their Majesties King William 'and Queen Mary.' But to appreciate its horrid significance, we must remember that the now mouldy doctrines of 'Divine

'right' and 'passive obedience' were then as much the talk of the clergy of the Church of England as incense, lights, and the sacramental theory are to-day. The books and pamphlets on these subjects may still be counted, though hardly read, in thousands. The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Sancroft) and five of his brethren, including Bishop Ken, were deprived of their sees, and at least four hundred divines followed them into exile. These were the non-jurors, men of fabulous learning and primitive piety, who added evangelical fervour and simplicity to High Church doctrine. To read the lives of these men is to live among the saints and doctors, and their expulsion from the Church they alone loved and they alone could properly defend diverted into alien channels the very qualities we find so sorely lacking in the Anglican Church of the eighteenth century. How absurd to grumble at the Hoadlys and Watsons, the Hurds and the Warburtons! They were all that was left. Faith and fervour, primitive piety, Puritan zeal, Catholic devotion—each in its turn had been decimated and cast out. What a history it is! Whether you read it in the Roman page of Lingard and Dodd and

Morris, or in the Anglican record of Collier, or turn over the biographies to be found in our old friends Walker and Calamy, what can you do but hold up your hands in horror and amazement? Wherever and whenever there was goodness, piety, faith, devotion, out it had to go. It was indeed as into a dungeon, stripped, swept, and bare, that the Church of England stepped at the revolution, and in that dungeon she lay for a hundred years. Since then many things have happened. There has been a revival of faith and fervour in the Church of England, so much so that Purge No. 5 may shortly be expected.

The reason why I have dwelt at great length on these facts of Church history is because we should have them in mind if we are to understand what may be called the *status quo ante bellum* John Wesley waged with the Devil in Great Britain.

Wesley's motive never eludes us. In his early manhood, after being greatly affected by Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* and the *Imitatio Christi*, and by Law's *Serious Call* and *Christian Perfection*, he met 'a serious man,' who said to him: 'Sir, you wish to serve

'God and go to heaven. Remember, you 'cannot serve Him alone. You must 'therefore find companions or make them. 'The Bible knows nothing of solitary re-'ligion.' He was very confident, this serious man, and Wesley never forgot his message: 'You must find companions or 'make them. The Bible knows nothing 'of solitary religion.' These words for ever sounded in Wesley's ears, determining his theology, which rejected the stern individualism of Calvin, and fashioning his whole polity, his famous class meetings and generally gregarious methods.

'Therefore to him it was given
Many to save with himself.'

We may continue the quotation and apply to Wesley the words of Mr. Arnold's memorial to his father:

'Languor was not in his heart,
Weakness not in his word,
Weariness not on his brow.'

If you ask what is the impression left upon the reader of the Journals as to the condition of England question, the answer will vary very much with the tenderness of the reader's conscience and with the

extent of his acquaintance with the general behaviour of mankind at all times and in all places. Wesley himself is no alarmist, no sentimentalist; he never gushes, seldom exaggerates, and always writes on an easy level. Naturally enough he clings to the supernatural, and is always disposed to believe in the *bonâ fides* of ghosts and the diabolical origin of strange noises; but outside this realm of speculation Wesley describes things as he saw them. In the first published words of his friend Dr. Johnson, 'he meets with no basilisks that 'destroy with their eyes, his crocodiles de-'vour their prey without tears, and his 'cataracts fall from the rocks without 'deafening the neighbouring inhabitants.'

Wesley's humour is of the species donnish, and his modes and methods quietly persistent.

'On Thursday, the 20th May (1742), I 'set out. The next afternoon I stopped a 'little at Newport-Pagnell, and then rode 'on till I overtook a serious man, with 'whom I immediately fell into conversa-'tion. He presently gave me to know 'what his opinions were, therefore I said 'nothing to contradict them. But that did 'not content him. He was quite uneasy

'to know "whether I held the doctrines of
'"the decrees as he did;" but I told him
'over and over: "We had better keep to
'"practical things, lest we should be angry
'"at one another." And so we did for
'two miles, till he caught me unawares,
'and dragged me into the dispute before I
'knew where I was. He then grew warmer
'and warmer; told me I was rotten at
'heart, and supposed I was one of John
'Wesley's followers. I told him "No.
'"I am John Wesley himself." Upon
'which

'"Improvisum aspris Veluti qui sentibus anguem
Presset——"

'he would gladly have run away outright,
'but being the better mounted of the two
'I kept close to his side, and endeavoured
'to show him his heart till we came into
'the street of Northampton.'

What a picture have we here of a fine May morning in 1742, the unhappy Calvinist trying to shake off the Arminian Wesley! But he cannot do it. *John Wesley is the better mounted of the two*, and so they scamper together into Northampton.

The England described in the Journal is an England still full of theology. All kinds

of queer folk abound; strange subjects are discussed in odd places. There was drunkenness and cock-fighting, no doubt, but there were also Deists, Mystics, Swedenborgians, Antinomians, Necessitarians, Anabaptists, Quakers, nascent heresies, and slow-dying delusions. Villages were divided into rival groups, which fiercely argued the nicest points in the aptest language. Nowadays in one's rambles a man is as likely to encounter a gray badger as a black Calvinist.

The clergy of the Established Church were jealous of Wesley's interference in their parishes, nor was this unnatural; he was not a Nonconformist, but a brother Churchman. What right had he to be so peripatetic? But Wesley seldom records any instance of gross clerical misconduct. Of one drunken parson he does indeed tell us, and he speaks disapprovingly of another whom he found one very hot day consuming a pot of beer in a lone alehouse. I am bound to confess I have never had any but kindly feelings toward that thirsty ecclesiastic. What, I wonder, was he thinking of as Wesley rode by? *Méditations Libres d'un Solitaire Inconnu*—unpublished!

When Wesley, with that dauntless courage of his—a courage which never forsook him, which he wore on every occasion with the delightful ease of a soldier—pushed his way into fierce districts, amid rough miners dwelling in their own village communities almost outside the law, what most strikes one with admiration, not less in Wesley's Journal than in George Fox's (a kindred though earlier volume), is the essential fitness for freedom of our rudest populations. They were coarse and brutal and savage, but rarely did they fail to recognise the high character and lofty motives of the dignified mortal who had travelled so far to speak to them. Wesley was occasionally hustled, and once or twice pelted with mud and stones, but at no time were his sufferings at the hands of the mob to be compared with the indignities it was long the fashion to heap upon the heads of Parliamentary candidates. The mob knew and appreciated the difference between a Bubb Dodington and a John Wesley.

I do not think any ordinary Englishman will be much horrified at the demeanour of the populace. If there was disturbance it was usually quelled. At Norwich two

soldiers who disturbed a congregation were seized and carried before their commanding officer, who ordered them to be soundly whipped. In Wesley's opinion they richly deserved all they got. He was no sentimentalist, although an enthusiast.

Where the reader of the Journal will be shocked is when his attention is called to the public side of the country—to the state of the gaols, to Newgate, to Bethlehem, to the criminal code, to the brutality of so many of the judges and the harshness of the magistrates, to the supineness of the bishops, to the extinction in high places of the missionary spirit—in short, to the heavy slumber of humanity.

Wesley was full of compassion—of a compassion wholly free from hysterics and credulity. In public affairs his was the composed zeal of a Howard. His efforts to penetrate the dark places were long in vain. He says in his dry way: 'They won't let me go to Bedlam because 'they say I make the inmates mad, or into 'Newgate because I make them wicked.' The reader of the Journal will be at no loss to see what these sapient magistrates meant. Wesley was a terribly exciting preacher, quiet though his manner was.

He pushed matters home without flinching. He made people cry out and fall down, nor did it surprise him that they should. You will find some strange biographies in the Journal. Consider that of John Lancaster for a moment. He was a young fellow who fell into bad company, stole some velvet, and was sentenced to death, and lay for awhile in Newgate awaiting his hour. A good Methodist woman, Sarah Peters, obtained permission to visit him, though the fever was raging in the prison at the time. Lancaster had no difficulty in collecting six or seven other prisoners, all like himself waiting to be strangled, and Sarah Peters prayed with them and sang hymns, the clergy of the diocese being otherwise occupied. When the eve of their execution arrived, the poor creatures begged that Sarah Peters might be allowed to remain with them to continue her exhortations; but this could not be. In her absence, however, they contrived to console one another, for that devilish device of a later age, solitary confinement, was then unknown. When the bellman came round at midnight to tell them, 'Remember you are to die to-day,' they cried

out: 'Welcome news—welcome news!' How they met their deaths you can read for yourselves in the Journal, which concludes the narrative with a true eighteenth century touch: 'John Lancas-'ter's body was carried away by a com-'pany hired by the surgeons, but a crew 'of sailors pursued them, took it from them 'by force, and delivered it to his mother, 'by which means it was decently interred 'in the presence of many who praised God 'on his behalf.'

If you want to get into the last century, to feel its pulses throb beneath your finger, be content sometimes to leave the letters of Horace Walpole unturned, resist the drowsy temptation to waste your time over the learned triflers who sleep in the seventeen volumes of Nichols—nay, even deny yourself your annual reading of Boswell or your biennial retreat with Sterne, and ride up and down the country with the greatest force of the eighteenth century in England.

No man lived nearer the centre than John Wesley, neither Clive nor Pitt, neither Mansfield nor Johnson. You cannot cut him out of our national life. No single figure influenced so many

minds, no single voice touched so many hearts. No other man did such a life's work for England. As a writer he has not achieved distinction. He was no Athanasius, no Augustine. He was ever a preacher and an organizer, a labourer in the service of humanity; but, happily for us, his Journals remain, and from them we can learn better than from anywhere else what manner of man he was, and the character of the times during which he lived and moved and had his being.

II

WHAT, THEN, DID HAPPEN AT THE REFORMATION?

(1896)

WHAT happened at the English Reformation? is a question which seems by common consent of scholars to be carried over to a general and still unsettled account. Hardly a student who is not by faith or profession a partisan is to be found ready with an answer. Yet there does exist on this subject, as indeed on most subjects, a popular opinion, and it was therefore a piece of rather poor affectation of the Archbishop of Canterbury's* the other day to appear surprised at the notion being abroad that Anne Boleyn had anything to do with the Reformation, and to proceed, as he did, to pour gentle ridicule on the

* Dr. Benson.

proposition that what then happened was serious enough to break the continuity of English Church history. The Archbishop must know that these errors, if errors they be, are widely spread throughout the commonalty. How should it be otherwise? Ordinary unleisured folk, who have not the Lambeth Library at their elbows, have to pick up their scanty scraps of historical information as best they can from such common and possibly tainted sources as hearsay and popular histories, and the information they thus acquire assures them that the Church of Parker and Laud, and Tillotson and Tait, is not the Church of Warham and Morton, and Becket and Anselm. Lord Macaulay's *History*, like *Pickwick*, is a book of great repute and wide circulation. The historical accuracy of both works may be challenged, but to ignore their influence is absurd. The great body of our literature, our poetry, our drama, our history, is and has been ever since the Reformation broadly, almost brutally, Protestant, and has proceeded on the assumption that what happened at the Reformation was not only rupture with Rome and the Begging Friars (of whom our pre-Reforma-

tion literature is so disagreeably full), but a resettlement of religion on a new footing. If it was not, most grievously for the last three hundred years has the public ear been abused. To disabuse the public mind, to Catholicise John Bull, will prove a task of huge difficulty, and demand a bolder front and a far more vigorous dialectic than Dr. Benson seems prepared either to exhibit or to employ.

A serious difficulty in the way of the Anglican party is the considerable and daily increasing hold on the popular imagination that has of late years been obtained by the Roman Catholics. Englishmen are ever prone to flatter a fallen foe, and there is much that is touching and forlorn in the spectacle of an English Roman Catholic no longer able to adore his risen Lord in any one of those stately Mother Churches built by the piety and still instinct with the genius of his ancestors, or to hear within their walls the tinkle of that bell, a sound carrying with it a richer freight of religious association than any other sound or incident of Christian worship.

Dr. Lingard's *History of England*, though not so widely read as Macaulay's still is,

or as Hume's once was, enjoys a great reputation; and it would, I think, be safe to assert that for one non-Roman Catholic Englishman who is acquainted with the Anglican presentation of the Reformation there are hundreds who are familiar (in its main outline) with the Roman Catholic presentation of the same series of events.

It is by biography and scraps of story about interesting people that historical tradition is chiefly kept alive in the breasts of the vulgar, and it so happens that no Anglican saint or hero has as yet obtained any hold upon the popular imagination; whilst on the Roman side Sir Thomas More, for example, is a universal favourite, and the story of his being led to death for denying the religious supremacy of a monarch to whom he was personally attached is one of the best known in English history. The fate of John Fisher excites the compassion of many who are not in the habit of calling him 'Blessed 'John Fisher,' but on the other hand to mourn the execution, cruel as it was, of Archbishop Laud is to belong to a coterie.

The fact is that most people have not left room enough in their minds for the

Anglican view, which, old as it is and excellent as it is, and well supported as it may be, is yet for (to use John Locke's convenient phrase) 'the bulk of mankind' a new view. Protestants we know, and Papists we know, but who are you?

This difficulty, serious as it is (the sooner it is faced the better), will be got over, and more time will shortly be occupied with the question, 'What happened at the 'Reformation?' than is likely to please the fine gentlemen who are quite willing to be called members of the Church of England, and to be married and buried (when their time comes) according to her rites, but who, save as aforesaid, busily absent themselves from her services, ridicule her pretensions to supernatural gifts, and would (can we doubt it?) lustily denounce their Mother Church for an impertinent hussy were she to attempt to submit them to that religious discipline they so often so sorely need.

The importance of the question can hardly be overstated, involving as it does for many minds the gravest consequences; for should it appear probable that what happened at the Reformation was a breach of the visible unity of the Church, those

men the peace of whose minds is bound up with visible unity must seek that unity elsewhere.

When we remember, and it is difficult long to forget, the intellectual incapacity of nearly all of us, our melancholy inability to fix our attention upon any subject for a lengthened period of time, how soon we grow tired, how quickly a judicial attitude of mind becomes irksome to us, and how quick we are to abandon it altogether, and once more to give our passions, prejudices, and predilections the free play they so dearly love; and whilst we ruefully call to mind under what a mass of documents, pamphlets, sermons, liturgies, Acts of Parliament and of Convocation the history of the Reformation lies buried, and all the Canons and Councils of the Church by which, when the history is ascertained, it must be judged, it is sorrowful to reflect that the peace of mind of a single soul should be stretched upon the rack of an inquiry which must necessarily prove a protracted one. But how can it be avoided? The matter does not lie beyond the province of private judgment. There is (*ex hypothesi*) no Church authority to which an appeal can safely be made. No use asking

the Bishop of Rome what he thinks of the Reformation. The Greek Church cannot be got to take any interest in the matter. Historians! their name is Perfidy! Unless they have good styles they are so hard to read, and if they have good styles they are so apt to lie. By what means shall a plain man—a busy man, a man very partially educated—make up his mind what happened at the Reformation?

How do we ever make up our minds about anything? I can only suppose that it is by a mixed process of rejection and concentration. We reject a whole host of surrounding matters, not because we deliberately consider them irrelevant, but because, for one reason or another, they are alien both to our likes and our dislikes —they leave us unmoved; whilst other men, differently constituted, brought up in other surroundings—in a different library, for example—may find amongst the considerations we disregard the motive power of their resolutions. And as we reject what does not move us, so we concentrate ourselves on what does, and thus is the battlefield selected. Each one of us has his own. The contest over, we stand committed to one side or the other. We

seldom repeat the process. The brick once hardened in the sun, the mould is thrown away, and the shape remains for ever determined.

I suppose it is because we know how men come by their opinions that we are so little oppressed by authority in such matters. No Protestant is shaken in his protestation merely because the wisest and best man he has ever known has joined the Roman communion. The sturdy Nonconformists who so bravely rallied round Mr. Gladstone, and were proud to account him their great chief and never wearied of extolling his wisdom and goodness, were yet accustomed when in their teacups to chirp merrily over his Anglicanisms, and seldom paid him the compliment of reading his *Church Principles*. For the things he cared most about they care nothing. There is something terrible in men's indifference to the religious and philosophical opinions of their friends.

But though man may not be a speculative animal, he has got to speculate. He may do it badly, but it has to be done. Our children, if not our august selves, will make up their minds what happened at the Reformation, and my suggestion is that

they will do so in a majority of cases, not by any elaborate or exhaustive process of research and reasoning, but by concentrating their attention upon what will seem to them most important.

And especially will they bend their minds upon the Mass. The English Church before the Reformation celebrated the Mass after the same fashion, though not in identical language, as it has to-day been celebrated in Nôtre Dame of Paris. Has the English Church as a Church since the Reformation continued to celebrate the Mass after the same fashion and with the same intention as she did before? If 'Yes,' to the ordinary British layman the quarrel with the Pope, even the ban of the Pope and his foreign cardinals, will seem but one of those matters to which it is so easy to give the slip. Our quarrel with the Pope is of respectable antiquity — France, too, had hers. But if 'No,' the same ordinary layman will be puzzled, and, if he has a leaning to sacraments and the sacramental theory of religion and nature, will grow distraught.

Nobody nowadays, save a handful of vulgar fanatics, speaks irreverently of the Mass. If the Incarnation be indeed the

one Divine event to which the whole creation moves, the miracle of the altar may well seem its restful shadow cast over a dry and thirsty land for the help of man, who is apt to be discouraged if perpetually told that everything really important and interesting happened, once for all, long ago in a chill historic past.

However much there may be that is repulsive to many minds in ecclesiastical millinery and matters—and it is not only the merriment of parsons that is often found mighty offensive—it is doubtful whether any poor sinful child of Adam (not being a paid agent of the Protestant Alliance) ever witnessed, however ignorantly, and it may be with only the languid curiosity of a traveller, the Communion Service according to the Roman Catholic ritual without emotion. It is the Mass that matters; it is the Mass that makes the difference, so hard to define, so subtle is it, yet so perceptible, between a Catholic country and a Protestant one, between Dublin and Edinburgh, between Havre and Cromer.

Here, I believe, is one of the battlefields of the future.

An earlier question, which goes, no doubt,

to the root of the matter, the validity of the Anglican Orders, will not, so I conjecture, so much vex the minds of the laity. Englishmen are slow to give up at the bidding of a foreigner any trapping they are told they have got. The canonical consecration of Parker is denied by some Romanists, but in the opinion of most people it holds water. The story of the sham consecration at the Nag's Head is as vulgar a falsehood as the scandal about Pope Joan. There *was* a luncheon at the Nag's Head, St. Paul's Churchyard, for which, as Heylin tells us, 'Parker paid the shot'; but then there always was a luncheon at the Nag's Head on suchlike occasions—the licensed victualler saw to that—Reformation or no Reformation. But to suppose that Parker, who was a good bit of an antiquary and desperately nervous (being well aware that he was crossing a stream), should have been indifferent to his own 'succession,' is absurd. Bishop Barlow, the consecrator, though a married man and a terrible time-server, was canonically as much a bishop as the Pope himself; and so, too, was Hodgkins, the suffragan Bishop of Bedford, who also laid hands on Parker. The other assisting bishops, Scory and

Miles Coverdale, were Edwardian bishops consecrated by the altered rite. Roman Catholic writers are not always quite candid in their references to Parker's consecration, for though it is open to them to maintain that the *intention* of the consecrating bishops was not of such a kind as could convey the succession, they ought not to continue to cast doubts on the surrounding circumstances.

Passing over this earlier and general question as one not so likely to weigh very heavily on lay minds, attention is sure to be fixed on four points relating to the Mass. First, the actual changes in the rite itself; second, the changes made in the Ordination Service of the clergy; third, the general intention of the parties to the change and the general effect of their actions; and, fourth, the teaching and declarations of the Church of England since the Reformation.

The first of these points need not, in these days of cheap reprints, public libraries, and, better still, of second-hand bookshops, present difficulty to anybody who is *mediocriter doctus*. Such a person can compare for himself the Roman Missal with the two Liturgies of King Edward the Sixth and

with the Book of Common Prayer, as now in use in our churches.*

The sound view to take of the successive revisions, alterations, and omissions of and in our English liturgies is, I presume, that which was expressed by that good Churchman and sound lawyer, Lord Hatherley, in the course of the judgment of the Privy Council in the famous case of Sheppard *v.* Bennett:

'Changes by which words or passages inculcating particular doctrines or assuming a belief in them have been struck out are most material as evidence that the Church has deliberately ceased to affirm these doctrines in her public services. At the same time, it is material to observe that the necessary effect of such changes when they stand alone is that it ceases to be unlawful to contradict such doctrines, and not that it becomes unlawful to maintain

* The most useful collection of ancient and modern liturgies for the ordinary layman is that compiled by Dr. Brett, the non-juror bishop, and published in 1720. It is easily obtained, either in the original edition or in the reprint of 1838. A short statement of the contents of the Eastern and Western Liturgies, so far as they are concerned with the Christian Sacrifice, may be found in Moehler's *Symbolism*, vol. i., note *B*.

'them. In the public or common prayers 'and devotional offices of the Church, all 'her members are expected and entitled to 'join; it is necessary, therefore, that such 'forms of worship as are presented by 'authority for general use should embody 'those beliefs only which are assumed to 'be generally held by members of the 'Church.'*

The differences between the Canon of the Mass according to the usage of Sarum (before the Reformation) and the First Liturgy of Edward the Sixth may be conveniently studied in Canon Estcourt's well-known book, *The Question of Anglican Ordinations Discussed* (Burns and Oates, 1873), pp. 292-320, where the two services are printed side by side. According to Canon Estcourt (no doubt a partisan writer), whilst the framework of the Mass was retained by the First Liturgy, 'every expression which 'implies a real and proper sacrifice has 'been carefully weeded'; but in a matter of this sort nothing can supersede the necessity of personal examination.

The two Liturgies of Edward the Sixth (1549 and 1552) notoriously differ, and these differences have been discussed over

* *Law Reports, Privy Council Appeals*, iv., p. 403.

and over again. Dr. Cardwell, in his well-known edition (Oxford, 1838), printed these Liturgies side by side. The First Liturgy contained a prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine, and a prayer of oblation which, said Dr. Cardwell, 'together with the form of words 'addressed to the communicants, were de-'signed to represent a sacrifice, and appeared 'to undiscriminating minds to denote the 'sacrifice of the Mass.'

Bishop Gardiner, a well-instructed theologian (though, if the author of the treatise *De Vera Obedientia*, no mere Pope's man), is reported to have stated that he had no quarrel with the First Liturgy, which he pronounced 'not far distant from the 'Catholic Faith,' but for the Second Liturgy he had nothing to say.

There are some differences between the Second Liturgy and the Service as settled by Queen Elizabeth and the one now in use.

The second point—namely, the changes made in the Anglican rite of ordination of its clergy—bears upon the subject in this way: It is argued both by Roman Catholics and by Evangelicals (if I may use that term merely for convenience) that the suc-

cessive alterations made in the old rite in 1549, 1552 and 1562 show at least such an ambiguity of purpose, so many mutilations and weakenings at critical places, as are enough when their general effect is considered to make it impossible to believe that the altered rite includes within its spiritual scope and intention the special and supernatural gifts of grace (including the consecration of the elements), which, so Catholics assert, have from the beginning been given in sacred ordination. In Dr. Lee's book on the *Validity of Anglican Orders*, and in Canon Estcourt's work already referred to, the means are supplied of, at all events, apprehending the nature of the controversy.

The third point, the *general* intention of the parties making these changes, involves an amount of judicial research and careful examination of such a mass of material, not all easily laid hands on, as to place it as much above the intellectual capacity of the laity as it would prove to be beyond the pecuniary resources of the majority of the clergy. Clergy and laity alike must wait till the work is done for them by someone they can trust.

The fourth point—namely, the teaching

of the Church herself upon the nature of this Sacrament—is the one with which the laity will naturally most concern itself.

At the time of the Reformation the doctrine of the pre-Reformation Church was Transubstantiation, and to dispute this doctrine, as Wycliffe did, was commonly regarded by English Churchmen as heretical. The first formal declaration that Transubstantiation was the doctrine of the Church was made at the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215, though a century and a half earlier a Pope in Council had condemned as heretical opinions practically identical with those of our Reformers on the subject. The Council of Constance (1415) repeated the declaration of the Fourth Lateran, whilst the Council of Trent, 1551, confirmed and settled Transubstantiation as being the doctrine of the Church.*

* Quoniam autem Christus, redemptor noster, corpus suum id, quod sub specie panis offerebat, vere esse dixit: ideo persuasum semper in ecclesia Dei fuit, idque nunc denuo sancta hæc synodus declarat, per consecrationem panis et vini, conversionem fieri totius substantiæ panis in substantiam corporis Christi Domini nostri, et totius substantiæ vini in substantiam sanguinis ejus. Quæ conversio convenienter et proprie a sancta catholica ecclesia transubstantiatio est appellata' (*Concil. Trid.*, Sess. xiii., c. 14).

On this point, and on this point only, the Reformers spoke no uncertain sound. With Transubstantiation the Church of England (as soon as Henry VIII. came to an end) would have nothing whatever to do; it was repudiated alike by Puritan and High Churchman. The twenty-eighth Article of Religion denies it in set terms, and boldly declares it to be repugnant to the plain words of Scripture. No English clergyman can allege a corporeal presence of the natural Body of Christ in the elements, or that the Body of Christ is present in a corporeal or natural manner, without not only disobeying the Privy Council (no great matter), but without disturbing and greatly discrediting the whole Elizabethan settlement, and thereby gravely endangering the carefully-constructed and nationally-attractive Laudian doctrine of the spiritual authority of the English Church as such.

The last section of the twenty-eighth Article, which declares that the Eucharist was not by Christ's ordinance *reserved*, *carried about*, *lifted up*, or *worshipped* (all acts of piety and devotion intimately associated with the daily religious life of thousands of persons in the days of 'the old religion'),

and the general tenor of the Thirty-first Article, which asserts that the offering of Christ was finished upon the Cross, and that the sacrifices of the Masses, in the which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead to have remission of pain or guilt, 'were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits,' make it plain, what no student will deny, that the Eucharist, its nature and character and effect, were vital points of controversy between the parties.

Not only the Reformers but the Laudian divines were bitter opponents of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, denouncing it as materialistic and even gross. Cosin and, at a later date, Leslie, writing with the freedom of their times, were not afraid of employing very gross images and figures of speech to make plain their aversion to the doctrine. How far this objection still presses it will be curious to discover. The Incarnation, the Sacrifice of the Cross, have a materialistic aspect, and ill-conditioned writers of our own and other times have used with regard to these mysteries language as offensive, but not more so than that applied by Cosin and Leslie to the doctrine of the Roman

Church as to the corporeal presence in the consecrated elements.

But too great reliance must not be placed upon the Articles, which only serve to champ the clergy. No layman is required to subscribe to them, unless it be at King's College, London. Their perusal may afford an occasional distraction from a sermon our inattention is pleased to call dull, but such an acquaintance seldom ripens into knowledge. Besides, there is a growing indisposition to pin the Church of England, a great institution with a strong hold on the nation, down to the dead language of her Articles. So great a latitude of interpretation has already been so freely conceded that it would be foolish to refuse a little more if demanded. The Reformers were not inspired, nor is it now ever suggested that they were in any sense the favourites of heaven. They negotiated a compromise, they settled the terms of a 'consent-order,' of which the Articles are only a part, and it all happened three centuries ago. Pious laymen will never consent to have the means of grace doled out to them by decayed equity draughtsmen, or, worse still, successful mercantile lawyers, even with an Archbishop thrown

in, sitting in the Privy Council, or to take their religious privileges, strained drop by drop, through the contradictory propositions of sixteenth-century divines in great difficulties.

What the pious and well-disposed laity of the twentieth century will require to be told is, not what Cranmer thought about the Mass, or what Parker thought about it, or what Cosin or even Waterland thought about it, or what Dr. Pusey thought about it, but what says the living Church of to-day on the subject of the Mass. Has the disappearance of the Host from the common daily religious life of Protestant England for three hundred years and more any significance, or has it not? That it was a change affecting our literature, our life, our national position, is plain, but was it more than a purification of doctrine, and did it amount to a change of attitude and mind?

We know how those who are popularly called Protestants or ultra-Protestants will answer this question. We know how Roman Catholics answer it. 'Canterbury 'has gone its way,' cried Dr. Newman at Oscott, 'York is gone, Durham is gone, 'Winchester is gone. It was sore to fail

'with them.' Amidst these voices is that of the Church of England alone to be dumb, or to be heard but in the essays and sermons of brilliant but irresponsible divines?

It will be a mere waste of time to concoct rival lists, even though those lists be called *catenas*, of divines, and to set them quoting one against the other. It was well enough in the Tractarian days to fill pages with extracts from Bull and Bramhall and Thorndike and Jackson and the rest, because Churchmen then needed to be taught that before the black days of Hoadly and Warburton and Paley there were in the English Church divines of another calibre, doctors of quite a different divinity. It was a great work to do, and splendidly has it been done. The High Church case is now admitted. The stream of Church tradition has trickled down to us along two distinct channels, which at times (one or the other of them) have been well-nigh choked up; but the streams have never ceased to flow, and still are they flowing side by side. High views and low views, sacraments and services, altars and tables, priests and ministers, mysteries and no mysteries, regeneration and no regenera-

tion, presence and no presence, are they not still to be found in that branch of God's visible Church which a distinguished advocate in the Court of Arches once pronounced to be the most learned, the freest, the most rational Church in the world? Abana and Pharpar were, I have no doubt, prodigious noble streams, contrasting most pleasantly one with the other, and affording every variety of bathing accommodation. The great, perhaps the only, merit of Jordan was its unity.

So far as the Anglican High Church clergy are concerned, though conjecture is always rash, the balance of power seems to have shifted in their favour. If one takes up to-day the letters and sermons of Dr. Pusey, published *circa* 1839-1842, and observes their tone, which is that of a man in a minority pleading for a great cause which he recognises may prove a lost cause, and then glances over the high divinity now current amongst the clergy, and notices how jaunty it has become, how well satisfied it is with its position and its prospects, this conclusion is forced upon you. But clerical opinion and lay opinion are two very different things, and owing to the extraordinary and (I think) most

discreditable disinclination of the laity to speak out their minds on theology, it would probably be impossible even for the best informed of Churchmen to hazard a conjecture as to the preponderance on one side or the other of the opinions on matters of faith and doctrine of the regularly communicating and well-instructed members of the Church of England.

But a Church which does not, when the time comes for her to do so, affirm positively and synodically her faith, is a Church in fetters, and if her bondage continues for centuries becomes a Church forsaken. One recalls the awe-struck manner in which Mr. Gladstone in his *Church Principles* (1840) refers to Hoadly, and reminds his readers how Hoadly was a bishop of the Anglican branch of the visible Church for fifty years. Mr. Gladstone also quotes some 'fatal words' of poor Archdeacon Paley's. But Hoadly has now lain in his splendid tomb at Winchester for more than a hundred years, and Paley is now of no more account as a divine than the inimitable author of *Tristram Shandy*, whose sermons were at one time as widely read as his love-letters. A great tree is not to be condemned because a strange or

even an obscene bird or two have occasionally found lodging amongst her branches and pecked holes in her bark. And, after all, the heaviest blow dealt the Church of England in her character of Witness of the Faith was not dealt by Hoadly or any eighteenth-century man, but in the year 1850, which is, I think, the date of the Gorham case.

The eighteenth century, with all her splendid achievements, her great battles and her great books, is at an end, and, indeed, her feverish and inconsequent successor has both feet in the grave. The question is, What will be the status and authority of the Church of England in the twentieth century?

Mr. Matthew Arnold, in one of his interesting letters, makes it a matter of complaint against Lord Salisbury that he affects scientific pursuits as matters of investigation and proof, and scientific theology as matter of creed. This did not at all jump with Mr. Arnold's humour, but the probability is that the man of the twentieth century will share more of Lord Salisbury's prejudices than of Mr. Arnold's. It does not follow that he will share Lord Salisbury's opinions, but it may well be

that he will resemble him in his belief that Christianity without dogmas, precise and well defined, is more like a nervous complaint than a positive religion.

It is the just boast of the English Church that it is based upon the divine right of episcopacy; her old chamber-fellow the King, whose similar right she once espoused, having disappeared at the time of the revolution in 1688, and, not having been heard of since 1745, must now be presumed to be dead. Episcopacy as practised by the English Church is anti-Papal. This is nowhere pointed out with greater vivacity than by Leslie in more than one part of his charming writings, and it is referred to by way of objection by Moehler, who remarks: 'If the episcopacy is to form a corporation outwardly as well as inwardly bound together in order to unite all believers in one harmonious life, which the Catholic Church so urgently requires, it stands in need of a centre where all may be held together and firmly connected. What a helpless, shapeless mass, incapable of all combined action, would the Catholic Church not have been, spread as she is over all parts of the world, had she been

'possessed of no head, no supreme bishop
'revered by all!'*

Papal infallibility is not an attractive doctrine to the English mind, but a dumb Church also presents difficulties.

In the diocesan system, which is the English system, a Churchman, whether cleric or lay, owes canonical obedience to his own diocesan only. No other bishop or archbishop has any authority over him. The excellent Law (even if he had not been a non-juror) was within his rights in tearing the unhappy Hoadly to pieces in those famous letters, for Hoadly was not Law's diocesan; but, on the other hand, Newman at once stopped his tracts when the Bishop of Oxford besought him to do so.

But here, again, the laity are likely to prove restive. Discipline is one thing, faith and doctrine quite another. It would be childish to hold that in the diocese of Lincoln the consecrated elements become the Body and Blood of Christ (though not by way of substitution), whilst in the diocese of Liverpool the Holy Communion is regarded but as a Commemorative Service. We know this is not so. There are English churches in Liverpool where

* Moehler's *Symbolism*, vol. ii., p. 74.

the Real Presence on the altar is daily affirmed and (as an act of private devotion) adored, and I have no doubt that in the diocese of Lincoln there are still churches where the Rev. Hugh McNeile (could he be restored to life) might honestly administer the rite.

Differences of opinion amongst bishops are of importance because of their diocesan authority, and because they are, with few exceptions, the only Churchmen who are in the habit of making declarations of faith in intelligible language. From time to time in their addresses to their clergy they deal with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and in such a way as to make it quite plain that their lordships differ with one another on the subject as widely as do the lower clergy. The bishops, who are the fathers and governors of the Church, are not agreed as to what is on the altars of the Church after the priest has pronounced the words of the service in use since the reign of Elizabeth.

Transubstantiation is not primitive doctrine, and very probably Purgatory is not; but, on the other hand, primitive doctrine does not mean indefinite doctrine, still less permissive and optional doctrine.

How long can any Church allow its fathers and its faithful laity to be at large on such a subject? Already the rift is so great as to present to the observer some of the ordinary indications of sectarianism. Pious Church folk of one way of thinking cannot bring themselves to attend the churches devoted to the other way. In the selection of summer quarters it has long become important to ascertain beforehand the doctrines espoused, and, as a consequence of such doctrines, the ritual maintained by the local clergy. This is not a matter of mere preference, as a Roman Catholic may prefer the Oratorians to the Jesuits; it is, if traced to its source, traceable to the altar. In some churches 'of the English obedience' there purports to be the visible sacrifice; in other churches of the same ostensible communion no such profession of mystery or miracle is made.

It is impossible to believe that a mystery so tremendous, so profoundly attractive, so intimately associated with the keystone of the Christian Faith, so vouched for by the testimony of saints, can be allowed to remain for another hundred years an open question in a Church which still asserts herself to be the Guardian of the Faith.

If the inquiry, What happened at the Reformation? were to establish the belief that the English Church did then in mind and will cut herself off from further participation in the Mass as a sacrifice, it will be difficult for most people to resist the conclusion that a change so great broke the continuity of English Church history, effected a transfer of Church property from one body to another, and that from thenceforth the new Church of England has been exposed to influences and has been required to submit to conditions of existence totally incompatible with any working definition of either Church authority or Church discipline.

III

THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

(1901)

IT is one of Bishop Butler's tremendous sayings, so resonant with the sincerity of his character, that religion is nothing unless it is true. I do not think this is the general belief. Gibbon's famous sneer about philosophers, magistrates, and mobs has not yet lost its point, and there are still many well-credited citizens who would not scruple to say that the Christian religion, which is the only one that makes any demands upon the Western World, is so closely bound up with our admirable Common Law, is so intimately associated with our educational system, so admirably well-adapted (in the opinion of the rich) to make the poor contented with their lot, affords so safe an outlet for the enthusiasm latent in many breasts, that, whether it be

true or false, so far from being *nothing*, it is one of the most valuable bulwarks of society.

Such an opinion, however, is obviously not personal, and it may be that Butler was thinking of the individual man and what religion is to him in the dark watches of the night, and not what he may imagine it to be to others whose passions or predatory instincts he may very reasonably desire to control.

The assent of the mind to a proposition or to a series of propositions is never hypothetical. You cannot repeat the Apostles' Creed with faith, on the footing that if it happens to be untrue you are none the worse off for having believed it, whilst if it turns out to be true in substance and in fact, you are all the better for having given it the credit to which it proves entitled. You may sway backwards and forwards, from belief to unbelief, but you cannot at any one moment of time be in both states of mind.

Christianity being, so far as its confessions of faith are concerned, a modern religion, has from the first been subjected to hostile criticism. There have always been those who, though they had a fair chance

of believing in its divine authority, refused to do so. The Gospels record instances of sceptics. In the correspondence of the Christian Fathers, who lived in the times, so near, in many respects, to our own, when the New Faith was partly crushing out and partly raking in the half-smoking embers of paganism, you may read the arguments and apprehend the frame of mind of educated men and women of lofty life and noble aim, who found it impossible to accept Christianity even when presented to them with fascinating friendliness and unfailing urbanity in the private letters of St. Augustine and St. Jerome.

From those times downwards we grow accustomed to a dreary, though important, section of literature—Christian Apologetics, the Defence of Faith, sometimes compendiously called the Christian Evidences.

Evidence is one of the great words of humanity. We all want it. Without it we do not willingly act in any matter of personal importance, yet what it is and how it should be brought home to the mind are questions which have taken courts of justice centuries to unravel. Our English law of evidence, which has largely coloured men's minds, has been called

'the child of the jury.' As soon as juries ceased to be themselves witnesses, and became judges of the facts in dispute, the King's judges began with one accord to frame rules of exclusion, which should prevent the untutored lay mind from jumping to conclusions, and our so-called Law of Evidence became nothing but a list of things that might not be said and of witnesses who could not be called. It was a long time being built up, and it has taken just a century to pull it all down. It is hardly too much to say that nothing is left of our so-called Law of Evidence but the rule prohibiting hearsay. The jury still must not be told what the soldier said, for unless the soldier is there to go into the box, what he said 'is not evidence.'

The law will not help us in this matter; it will rather hinder us by suggesting false analogies and filling our minds with misleading memories.

But the question of evidence remains. All are agreed that the Christian religion has an historical basis. Something happened in Judæa, and because something happened there, our assent is invited to a number of assertions purporting to be a revelation from heaven, which are in them-

selves incapable of demonstration, and, indeed, of exact expression in words. 'A 'Revelation,' says Dr. Mozley, 'is, properly 'speaking, such only by virtue of telling 'us something which we could not know 'without it. But how do we know that 'that communication of what is undiscover-'able by human reason is true?'

The clear-headed, if prosaic, Paley has his answer ready: Miracles, nothing but miracles. And for long the controversy raged over the multiplication of loaves and the miraculous draught of fishes. Prove the Gospel miracles, and then you have simply *got* to believe in the whole cycle of Christian doctrine. You cannot help it. You may believe and tremble, as do the devils, or you may believe and rejoice, as do the saints, but believe you must. On the other hand, shake the Gospel miracles, any one of them, and down topple to their fall all the means of grace and the hope of glory.

It was a clear issue on paper, though really quite outside the human heart. It was contested on both sides here in England during the eighteenth century with great polemical vigour. A favourable example is Bishop Sherlock's '*Trial of the*

Witnesses of the Resurrection, published in 1729. This lively piece takes the agreeable form of a mock trial conducted, after a little preliminary buffoonery, by some gentlemen of the Inns of Court. Two counsel were appointed to argue for and against the Resurrection, and a fortnight was allowed them to get the case up, for, as the free-thinking advocate said pleasantly of his orthodox opponent, 'Consider, sir, 'the gentleman is not to argue out of 'Littleton, Plowden, or Coke, authors to 'him well known; but he must have his 'authorities from Matthew, Mark, Luke 'and John, and a fortnight is time little 'enough of all conscience to gain a 'familiarity with a new acquaintance.' And, turning to the gentleman, he said: 'I will call upon you before the fortnight 'is out, to see how reverend an appearance 'you make behind Hammond on the New 'Testament, a Concordance on the one 'hand, and a folio Bible with references on 'the other.' His opponent replied good-humouredly to this banter, and then, 'Upon 'this we parted, all pleased with the appoint-'ment made except the two gentlemen who 'were to provide the *entertainment*.'

The entertainment consisted in first

calling upon Counsel to prove the accusation that the evidence of the Resurrection is false. Says the Judge in a fine parody of the judicial manner of the day: 'Look 'ye, the evidence of the resurrection of 'Jesus is before the Court recorded by 'Matthew, Mark, and others. You must 'take it as it is, you can neither make it 'better or worse. These witnesses are 'accused of giving false evidence. Come 'to the point, and let us hear what you 'have to offer to prove the accusation.'

On this business footing the argument proceeds and does not call for much remark, except that Dr. Sherlock puts into the mouth of the prosecuting counsel the argument usually associated with the name of Hume: 'That in common affairs where 'nothing is asserted but what is probable 'and possible and according to the usual 'course of nature, a reasonable degree of 'evidence ought to determine every man; 'for the very probability or possibility of 'the thing is a support to the evidence, and 'in such cases we have no doubt but a 'man's senses qualify him to be a witness. 'But when the thing testified is contrary 'to the order of nature, and at first sight at 'least impossible, what evidence can be

'sufficient to overturn the constant evidence 'of Nature which she gives us in the con- 'stant and regular method of her opera- 'tions. If a man tells me he has been in 'France, I ought to give a reason for not 'believing him; but if he tells me he comes 'from the grave, what reason can he give 'why I should believe him?'

However, the Judge sums up on the orthodox side, and the jury after consultation return their verdict, that the Apostles are not guilty of giving false evidence in the case of the resurrection of Jesus; and thereupon the Judge jumps down from the bench, and is at once offered a fee if he will undertake to argue Lazarus's case, which is to come on next.

Anything more essentially irreligious, more defiling to the mysteries of the faith Dr. Sherlock was honestly defending, can hardly be imagined. Nor is there from first to last in this once famous tract any real appreciation of the nature of strict proof of an event alleged to have taken place seventeen hundred years before. You have no right to appeal unto Cæsar and then to disregard the rules of Cæsar's court. To parody a Court of Justice, and a trial by jury in England of a disputed fact, and

then to produce out of the library four old books in print without any evidence of their authorship, authority, or date, or of the circumstances of their compilation, and to treat the several statements contained in them as uncontradicted evidence, is, of course, childish. A religion may be none the worse for not being able to prove its supernatural origin before a British judge and jury, but to allege that it can do so is now impossible.

When, in 1825, Dr. Newman sat down to write his first essay on miracles, his temper and frame of mind were very different from Dr. Sherlock's, and yet in one respect they did not differ; for Newman does not in that essay bestow any attention on the documents which record the Scripture miracles. He simply takes them for granted, but for all that he is not prepared to rest with his whole weight upon miracles. He sees much that was hid from the old Bishop of London. Miracles have become but *a branch* of the Evidences. Newman, in 1825, recognised how previous apologists have first used the miracles to attest the doctrine, and then cited the doctrine to make you credit the miracle; and he also clearly saw how, apart from an antecedent

belief in a good and omnipotent God, miracles can be no evidence of the *morality* of a revelation. And he bluntly remarks what one now hears on all sides, that if the single fact of the Resurrection be established, quite enough will be proved to justify a belief in all the miracles of Scripture, and (he might have added, though he did not) to render belief in the other miracles a matter of indifference.

Since 1825 the oversight of Dr. Sherlock and Dr. Newman has indeed been cured, and the documents of Christianity have been rigorously, and sometimes almost vindictively, criticised and examined. It would be unwise for any plain man who has his living to make in a workaday world to pin his faith too tightly to any school of Biblical criticism. Romance, imagination, predilection, passion, prejudice, personal aversion, are at least as likely to be found inhabiting the studies of biblical students as infecting the laboratories of rival biologists or the offices of party politicians. A wholesome truth is quickly expanded into an exaggeration; exaggerated statements provoke a reaction which easily becomes retrogression. Still, despite the ebb and flow, the growth of

reputations, and then the ruthless lopping of them down to the ground, progress of some kind is made; and in the matter of Christian apologetics, though proof by miracle has not been formally abandoned, Paleyism is as dead as Queen Anne. In 1870, when Dr. Newman came to publish the *Grammar of Assent*, his dislike of Paleyism, observable enough in 1825 in the *Essay on Miracles*, bursts forth in unmistakable sincerity and warmth of expression:

'I confess to much suspicion of legal 'proceedings and legal arguments when 'used in questions whether of religion or 'of philosophy. . . . Why am I to begin 'with taking up a position not my own, 'and unclothing my mind of that large 'outfit of existing thoughts, principles, 'likings, desires and hopes which make me 'what I am? If I am asked to use Paley's 'argument for my own conversion, I say 'plainly I do not want to be converted by 'a smart syllogism; if I am asked to con-'vert others by it, I say plainly I do not 'care to overcome their reason without 'touching their hearts. I wish to deal not 'with controversialists, but with inquirers.'

This is very spirited, but it is to give up a great part of the case. 'I do not want

'to be converted by a smart syllogism'; or, in plain English, Dr. Newman will not be converted by the force of mere argument addressed to his reason. But is there no such thing as mental compulsion? Has a man *never* been convinced of anything against his wish? Is it to be assumed that for the future nobody will become a Christian unless he is mysteriously predisposed so to do? If this be so, whence comes this predisposition? Soul of Jonathan Edwards, art thou about to be justified after all these years?

The passage just quoted from the *Grammar of Assent* indicates the remarkable shifting of ground that has taken place during the last three decades.

A quarter of a century ago the ordinary Christian apologist had not completely shed his Paleyism, and still maintained the arguments, though he might cease to read the treatises of John Locke and Bishop Sherlock and Archdeacon Paley, whilst, to quote the language of the learned author of *Supernatural Religion* (1874): 'The prevalent characteristic of popular theology 'in England at this time may be said to 'be a tendency to eliminate from Christianity with thoughtless dexterity every

'supernatural element which does not quite 'accord with current opinion, and yet to 'ignore the fact that in so doing eccles- 'iastical Christianity has practically been 'altogether abandoned.'

To lighten the burden of faith, to maintain a rational Christianity, free from dogmas that cannot be verified historically, was the aim of the Broad Church party in the Church of England in 1874. Where is that party now? Its almost total disappearance is a remarkable and noteworthy fact. Broad Churchmen are all either dead or dumb.

Yet never was there a time when religion was more discussed. Young men and maidens are not so tongue-tied about it as it was the fashion to be thirty years ago. At the Universities, at the public schools, great changes are noticeable in this important respect. There is much fervour, not wholly unlike the manifestations that used to be called Evangelical. All around us we see proofs of energy and zeal and determination and self-sacrifice frequently associated with a devotion—albeit sometimes a hazy devotion—to the services of the Anglican Church.

Now, as it is not possible to dissociate

Christianity from evidence of some kind or other, and as Paleyism is dead, and the Broad Church party which dispensed with dogma is silenced, it is interesting to inquire, How are men's minds reconciled to the Christian Faith at this present moment?

The ground has shifted. About that there is no doubt. Canon Scott Holland, who is always frank, puts it thus:

'If this be the relation of faith to reason, 'we see the explanation of what seems at 'first sight to the philosopher to be the 'most irritating and hypocritical character-'istic of faith. It is always shifting its 'intellectual defences. It adopts this or 'that fashion of philosophical apology, and 'then when this is shattered by some novel 'scientific generalization of faith, probably 'after a passionate struggle to retain the 'old position, suddenly and gaily abandons 'it, and takes up the new formula, just 'as if nothing had happened. It dis-'covers that the new formula is admirably 'adapted for its purposes, and is, in fact, 'what it always meant, only it has un-'fortunately omitted to mention it. So it 'goes on, again and again; and no wonder 'that the philosophers growl at those hum-'bugs the clergy' (*Lux Mundi*, 15th Ed.,

25). Happily, there is never any real necessity for philosophers to growl at the clergy, unless, indeed, the philosophers are tied to the stake. Things run their destined course, but what that course is may without offence be made the subject-matter of inquiry.

One great change is easily noticed. It is the growing disposition to approach the central dogmas of Christianity by the avenues of Ritual. Dogma, said the Jewish Rationalist Bernez, is a source of disunion, but ancient ritual observances preserve a common *esprit de corps*.* Atmosphere is a great word just now. To deny the existence of atmosphere in the realm of thought is, in my opinion, proof of blunted susceptibilities. Not only does it exist, but its effect can hardly be exaggerated. The opponents of an Irish University with a Catholic atmosphere often point to Oxford and Cambridge as they now are, and ask triumphantly whether youthful members of dissenting households do not annually proceed to those seats of learning from whence all religious tests (or nearly all)

* I borrow this quotation from a remarkable article that lately appeared in the *Quarterly Review* entitled *The Ethics of Religious Conformity*.

have been banished. Why should not the Catholic youth of Ireland be content with Trinity College, Dublin, which throws open her famous doors to all ingenious souls, regardless of religious opinions? But atmosphere can only be tested by results, and one would like to know what percentage of the Nonconformist undergraduates who have proceeded to their degrees at Oxford and Cambridge during the last thirty-five years have successfully resisted the *genius loci*, have become ministers, deacons, and elders of their family chapels, and are now to be seen on Sunday mornings and evenings conducting a retinue of young schismatics into the family pew. I should like to have the figures. Atmosphere, I repeat, is a great word and a great thing, and ritual tends to breed it and to promote a dreamy acquiescence in hazy mysteries. I think those clergy who attach importance to incense in church services show more knowledge of human nature and of the strange forces of association than do those who laugh and sneer at fumigation. I know an old man who has admitted to me that he can never discern a tanyard by its smell without profound emotion, so

instantly is he reminded of his first home, and the shadowy outlines and tender impressiveness of a mother who died when he was but five years old. His father, I should guess, was a tanner.

It is obvious that a man who does not wish to break with Christianity, yet finds it out of the question to believe in any downright honest sense in the creed of Christendom, can find no shelter more convenient, less jarring and disagreeable, than an ancient, time-worn ritual, which gives dim expression to ghostly ideas, shadowy, symbolical, sacramental notions of sin, sacrifice and atonement, ideas which possess the advantage of never coming into contact with the so-called realities of history, and elude as gracefully as a wreath of white smoke the grasp of proof.

It is now thought, and even felt, to be indelicate to drag dogmas down into the arena of strife. I frankly shudder at the spectacle of Bishop Sherlock's Templars bandying about arguments for and against the Resurrection, and their discussions as to whether Christ was an enthusiast or a rogue or God Himself make me sick. Yet an undogmatic Christianity is an empty pretence. I remember Dr. Wallace in the

House of Commons pointing out in his unrivalled manner the intensely dogmatic character of 'Board School Christianity,' which is based upon two stupendous dogmas—the existence of God and the revelation in the New Testament.

Dogma cannot be dispensed with, but if it is introduced to your notice through the sensuous medium of Ritual and the observances of the Church, it is, so to speak, banished from the realms of day, from the fierce light that beats upon argument, to an emotional region, where it is so easy to assume whatever it is pleasant to believe or unprofitable to deny. The Christian apologist of the future will be more like Mr. Pater than Mr. Paley.

This frame of mind has been fostered by the undoubted force with which certain fashionable thinkers, themselves trained in the schools of sceptical thought, but personally indisposed for a variety of reasons, some good, some (it may be) not quite so good, to abandon Christianized notions and their relations (all of an easy nature) with the Christian Church, have carried and planted in the middle of the field of physical science the very agnostical flag which forty years ago the men of science

had so triumphantly waved over the field of revealed religion.

Assumptions incapable of logical proof once thought to be the peculiar weakness of dogmatic religion are shown to lie about the very foundations of science. It does seem impossible out of the individual experiences of our poor limping senses to construct a theory of causation or of anything else. The world has very soon grown weary of the rhetoric of natural philosophers. The great Sir Robert Peel was probably the last man of real eminence who could with gravity assure a company of his fellow-sinners that physical science imparts pleasure and consolation on a death-bed, nor would Lord Brougham to-day find a sympathetic audience ready to cheer his self-satisfied statement that one of the most gratifying *treats* which science affords us is the knowledge of the *extraordinary* powers with which the human mind is endowed. To-day we are not a little disenchanted. These treats and consolations turn our stomachs. The spectacle of Lord Brougham's extraordinary powers no longer pleases. We are in a mood ripe for an indolent reaction. We could almost revile the Moses who led

us out of the land of Egypt. The flesh-pots were pleasant, and it is with a malicious pleasure that we learn that Science has no better logical foundation for its syntheticism than our poor old friend Religion has for hers.

The Christian apologists look on with a bland smile. They can have no objection to an enlargement of the area of the scepticism of the natural man. Philosophic* doubt is no bad site for a Christian temple, and, after all, every religious man feels, though in bygone days he did not think it wise to say so, that a religion which cannot prove itself cannot be proved *ab extra*. Stories about strange occurrences in remote places, of which different versions have travelled down the ages, will no longer convince, if they ever did convince, a single free intelligence; but, on the other hand, no man is going to be put off his faith in God on account of a Gadarene swine.

This predisposition to believe is now, with an almost amazing frankness, taken as the starting-point in the race for faith.

You believe in Conscience, 'the abori-

* 'To despair of philosophy has become the first basis of theology.'—RENAN: *The Future of Science.*

'ginal vicar of Christ, a prophet in its 'informations, a monarch in its peremp-'toriness, a priest in its blessings;' but Conscience not only makes cowards of us all, but theists of a good many. Whence came this love of justice 'dwelling between 'the endless jar of right and wrong'? From believing in Conscience you come to believe in God. Believing in God, you chance one day to recognise in the reported words of Jesus the notes of Deity. Never man spoke like this Man. You believe Christ to be Divine. Believing Him to be Divine, it is impossible to believe that

> 'Far hence He lies
> In the lone Syrian town,
> And on His grave with shining eyes
> The Syrian stars look down.'

No; He rose from the dead, not because to rise from the dead is a convincing thing to do, but because, being Divine, He could not do otherwise. Had He not risen, He would not have been God. Having risen, it seems to follow, as the night the day, that the Spirit of God should remain upon the earth God had visited, to work upon the hearts of men all down the ages. The mission of the Comforter is as inevitable

after the Ascension as was the Resurrection after the death upon the Cross. If you are so minded, and find as a matter of daily experience that the Spirit of God is conveyed to you through sacramental channels, attested by the authority of the Church, who can say you nay?

What has evidence, in any ordinary sense of the word, got to do with this? 'By the term "evidence,"' says Jeremy Bentham, 'considered according to the 'most extended application that is ever 'given to it, may be, and seems in general 'to be, understood any matter of fact the 'effect, tendency, or design of which, 'when presented to the mind, is to produce 'a persuasion concerning the existence of 'some other matter of fact, a persuasion 'either affirmative or disaffirmative of its 'existence. The first question in natural 'religion is no more than a question of 'evidence. From the several facts that 'have come under my senses relative to the 'several beings that have come under my 'senses, have I or have I not sufficient 'ground to be persuaded of the existence 'of a being distinct from all these beings, 'a being whose agency is the cause of the 'existence of all these, but whose separate

'existence has never at any time by any 'perceptible impressions presented itself, as 'that of other beings has done, to the cog-'nizance of the senses?' (*Rationale of Judicial Evidence*, vol. i.)

Whenever a man writes like that about such a subject as Religion, whether he calls it natural or revealed, you know he has made up his mind beforehand. The most powerful teacher of the spirituality of things religious in England during the last century was Carlyle, who, writing in the year 1829, said of Novalis: 'He belongs 'to that class of persons who do not re-'cognise the syllogistic method as the 'chief organ for investigating truth, or feel 'themselves bound to stop short where its 'light fails them. Many of his opinions 'he would despair of proving in the most 'patient court of law, and would remain 'well content that they should be dis-'believed there.'

This is very much Dr. Newman's attitude.

It would, however, be premature to say that Christian apologists have thrown all the Christian evidences as they used to be understood to the winds. They may still be found resting their case on the historical

fact of the Resurrection, and this not so much because it is or is not an historical fact—for that in itself is felt to be somewhat of an objection to it—but because unless Christ rose from the dead, the Incarnation is conceived to be impossible, and the Incarnation is the basis of Christian dogma.

This is the way in which Mr. Moberley handles the subject in *Lux Mundi* (15th Ed., 171):

'Upon the historical truth or falsehood 'of the Resurrection hangs the whole 'question of the nature and work of Jesus 'Christ, the whole doctrine of Incarnation 'and Atonement. But in saying this it is 'necessary to guard our proper meaning. 'If we admit the fact of the Resurrection 'to be cardinal, what is the fact of the 'Resurrection which is in question? It is 'as far as possible from being simply a 'question whether "a man" could or 'could not, did or did not, reappear after 'death in life. . . . However much 'Christians may have at times to argue 'about the simple evidence for the '"yes" or "no" of the Resurrection of 'Jesus as if it were the alleged resurrection 'of any other man that was in question, 'neither the question itself nor the evidence

'about it can possibly be, in fact, of the 'same nature or upon the same level as 'the evidence about another. No amount 'of conviction of the reappearance in life 'of any other man would have any similar 'meaning or carry any similar conse-'quences. The inherent character of Him 'who rose and the necessary connection 'between what He was and had said and 'claimed for Himself on the one hand, and 'on the other His rising out of death; this 'is an essential part of that fact of the 'Resurrection which comes up for proof 'or disproof. The fact that Jesus Christ, '*being what He was*, the climax and fulfil-'ment of a thousand converging lines— 'nay, of all the antecedent history of man-'kind—rose from the dead, and by that 'fact of Resurrection illuminated and ex-'plained for the first time all that had 'before seemed enigmatical or contradic-'tory in what He was, and, indeed, in 'all humanity; this is the real fact of the 'Resurrection which confronts us. It is 'this vast fact which is either true or false. 'The Resurrection of the crucified Jesus 'cannot possibly be a bare or simple fact. 'When viewed as material manifestation 'of the moment only, it is at least mis-

'understood; it may be unintelligible. It 'is, no doubt, an event in history, and yet 'it confronts us even there in its place and 'witness in history, not simply as a finite 'historical event, but as an eternal counsel 'and infinite act of God.'

This lofty vein would have puzzled good Bishop Sherlock, and been altogether beyond the powers of the young gentleman who got up his brief for the Resurrection in a fortnight, but it is a perfectly fair way of treating so tremendous a theme. Nobody ever became a Christian as the result of studying the Gospel accounts of the appearances of Christ after the crucifixion. The Resurrection itself is nowhere described; it is assumed. Nor did, so we are now assured, the Lord appear to His disciples in the Body which had hung upon the cross. 'This fact,' says Bishop Westcott, 'seems to me to involve the essence 'of the whole revelation of the risen Christ' (*The Revelation of the Risen Lord*). But if it was not a natural objective Body what was it? Sometimes the Gospel narrative tells us of a ghostly presence—a phantom—liberated from the laws of matter; sometimes of a presence so materialized as to appear to exhibit the *stigmata* of the cross.

The Bishop of Durham finds it necessary to discuss the problems of personality and identity, and to employ language not understanded of the common people. The Apostle John uses the remarkable words, 'For as yet they knew not the Scripture 'that He *must* rise from the dead.' After this it is almost absurd to talk about evidence. Christianity presents itself to the mind imperatively or not at all. If Christ were God He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures. A Christian believes in the Resurrection because he believes in the Incarnation, of all mysteries the most mysterious, the most ineffable, the farthest removed from the ken of man, and yet the one mystery which has been popularized and day after day presented to the people in the great drama of the Mass.

Readers of Dr. Newman's story, *Loss and Gain*, have not forgotten the famous passage Dean Stanley could never read without horror, describing in language of breathless rapidity and prodigious excitement the advent of God upon the Altar. The Miracle of the Mass flows from the Miracle of Calvary, and it is through the Mass that our present Christian apologists would have us approach the Incarnation.

Evidence is here out of place. We seem to be approaching a time in England when sceptics and divines may shake limp hands. The divine need no longer assert that he can compel belief or prove anything except, experimentally, upon the sad heart of man, whilst the sceptic may as well at once admit that he has disproved nothing. The finest philosophical poem of last century is Robert Browning's *Bishop Blougram*. Furthermore, the divine, if gently handled, may not be indisposed to admit that the central dogma of the Incarnation cannot yet be stated in language of finality but only in words of adumbration and mystical symbolism, whilst no sceptic can have any objection to make the most hackneyed of all Shakespearean quotations. The divine may then array himself in the robes of ancient sacrifice, and approach the altar, leaving the sceptic to conceal himself behind a pillar in the nave until the service is over. But when next they meet they should avoid the subject of *Church Discipline*. On that rock their friendship is destined to founder.

IV

THE IDEAL UNIVERSITY

DELIVERED AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON, JUNE 17, 1898

My Lord President, Gentlemen of the University College Union, Ladies and Gentlemen,—Although this is but the second occasion of the delivery of an oration, or what may, I hope, in these days of slipshod public speaking, pass muster for such, appropriate to the commemoration of the foundation of this College, I nevertheless find myself approaching my task, feeling deeply injured and most injuriously affected by the brilliant discourse of my friend, colleague, and only predecessor, Professor Poore.

It is quite true that I cannot possibly have any quarrel with that learned professor because he was minded to choose for his theme the history of this College, but I do

think that he might have selected for the subject of his discourse, following in that respect the precedent set him by our historical examiners, some period of our college history, say five years or five months, or in these times of illustrative detail, five minutes; instead of which he took the whole past as his *peculium*, and beginning our history in its early days continued it right down to the present time, in a series of brilliant and fascinating paragraphs or pictures.

Not content with giving us a full, true, and particular account, culled from what rare and recondite sources of history I know not, of the cave-men of our remote antiquity, Bentham and Brougham, he persisted in pursuing us down the stream of time, nor rested until he brought his oration to a conclusion with a well-deserved panegyric upon Sir Blundell Maple, who is (as you all know) our professor of philanthropy, the only one of my colleagues who is unpaid, and teaches by example.

Thus driven from the fastnesses of antiquity, and deprived by the reckless prodigality of my predecessor even of a 'modern instance,' I have no choice but to abandon the past altogether; and leaving

the real behind, to follow the tender, the lovely, the charming, but the ever-fleeting and elusive form of the Ideal.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I approach this subject with trepidation of mind. Mr. Rashdall begins his delightful history of the Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages by quoting from a mediæval author, who attributes the well-being and health of the Christendom he knew, to the joint operation of three great powers or virtues, which he designated by the names *Sacerdotium*, *Imperium*, *et Studium*—the Priesthood, the Empire, the University. Three moving words, stirring words, words well fitted to dominate both a Continent and an age; words crammed full of association, of that true history, the only true history that is made up of the lives of men.

The rule of Saint Benedict, the monks of the West, Emperor and Pope, the crowded class-rooms of famous professors, the poor scholars wandering from hospice to hospice throughout the length and breadth of Europe in search of learning, and even of lectures, the public disputations, the courses of study, grammar, logic, rhetoric! What a crowd of ideas, what a host of pictures are summoned to the bar of memory by

the mere utterance of these dominating words, *Sacerdotium, Imperium, et Studium Generale!*

Of course, we are told by Professor Gradgrind that we no longer live in the Middle Ages. I believe that to be a fact. But it is one upon which I neither tender you my congratulations, nor proffer you my regrets; for although we may select for the purposes of study periods of history, for the purposes of living, we have no choice. Indeed, this chopping up of history into periods and ages is apt to impinge not a little upon the absurd.

'We are all,' as Shakespeare says—and though Shakespeare was not a professor he is still quoted—'strangely woven of one 'piece'; and the glowing tapestry which is destined I hope to immortalize our doings, is being turned out from the same loom that wrought the records of the Middle Ages.

These words — the Priesthood, the Empire, the University—are still, though we do not live in the Middle Ages, master-words among us.

The Priesthood.—Well, I pass the Priesthood. But I do so with the observation that a man must be both ill-informed and

singularly unobservant, whether he lives a cloistered or a public life, who does not perceive connected with this word *Sacerdotium* symptoms of an activity which shows no signs of abatement. It would be surprising if it did, for is not the Priesthood one of the most ancient and most fruitful of human conceptions?

The Empire.—Here, indeed, is a golden field for orators, for politicians, for political economists, and for stockbrokers. I pass it by also, merely observing that it would be a thousand pities if such a subject were to be disregarded by the learned and the studious, and left entirely for the consideration of meetings of shareholders in the Cannon Street Hotel, or even for the bronzed gentlemen in white waistcoats who frequent the Imperial Institute, and cheer the Colonial Secretary.

It is with the third master-word I am alone concerned—*the University*. This word, I trust, has lost but little of its ancient significance; for never was there a time which more stood in need of the co-operation, along with the other forces that go to make a nation really great, of a University, than the time that is present. Nor can it be said that we are without

the means to give effect to our wishes in this respect if only we wish sufficiently strenuously—indeed, in these days we lack nothing to enable us to do anything, unless, indeed, it be the inspiration.

An ideal University would be famous and great, and as a consequence of its fame and greatness, it would be rich. It would be either possessed of its own right, or by reason of its situation be supplied with complete libraries, scientifically arranged, and some day or another usefully indexed; with museums that should be at once treasure-houses of a ransacked antiquity and storehouses of modern inventiveness; of laboratories where Science's favourite sons could repeat for the benefit of their pupils the experiments that have added to the stock of human knowledge, and also patiently pursue those original investigations, which are destined to add to it in the future; with a printing-press from which there should occasionally issue works of true scholarship, which in the best and noblest sense of a good and noble word should be, and for ever remain, essentially unpopular; with hospitals where by the bedside of suffering mortals, men, women and children, both professor and pupil

shall be stirred by the noblest of all impulses, that which teaches us to regard ourselves as the servants of humanity.

These are indeed fine things, noble things, some of them pleasant things, but they are not 'the pulse of the machine.' The cowl does not make the monk, or the trappings the University. The great business of the University is to teach. Not everything, that is the vulgarest of vulgar errors. The famous University of Salerno had but one faculty, that of medicine; but teach *something* it must, and the more numerous its faculties, the wider does a University cast its net. But whatever it teaches, it must do so with the greatest fulness of knowledge possible to the age. The teaching at the Ideal University is without equivocation and without compromise. Its notes are zeal, accuracy, fulness and authority. The education it essays to give will not teach you to outgabble your neighbour in the law courts, to unseat him in his constituency, or undersell him in the market-place. Gentlemen, let it be understood once and for all, these things do *not* require a University education. The Commonwealth may safely leave them to be performed by the co-

operation of the three primary forces—ambition, necessity, and greed.

To teach is, then, the first business of a true University, but only in those faculties in which it can command the attention of its scholars, and defy the criticism of learned Europe.

There was a private coach I used to hear of when I was at Cambridge, who was prepared to teach anybody anything. This honest man bargained but for one thing in addition to his exceedingly moderate terminal charges. 'You must give me,' so he would engagingly say, 'five minutes' start.' It was never refused him, and supplied with it, he and his pupil would amble contentedly along until they reached their desired haven, which, after all, was only the ordinary B.A. degree; equipped with which sign or symbol of a truly liberal education, the pupil, after endowing his bedmaker with all his worldly goods, so far as they were represented by broken crockery, would leave Cambridge by rail, prepared manfully to face the problems of the age; whilst the coach hied him back to the academical market-place, there to bespeak fresh pupils on the same fair handicap terms.

But the functions of the coach and the University are not the same.

How is a University to teach in those faculties which it feels itself competent to undertake? By means, of course, of its professors and lecturers, its demonstrators and tutors. You cannot teach without teachers, nor can a University be really great and famous which has not among its staff great and famous teachers.

In those bygone ages to which, as I have already remarked, we do not belong, there was apt to be a fierce contention among the Universities for the bodily possession of the most famous professors, theologians, canonists, etc. Indeed, so fierce did this contention sometimes become, that in order to capture a famous professor, Universities have been known to release him from all obligations to lecture; a frank departure from the ideal, which proves the continuity of human nature.

Listen to a description Sir William Hamilton gives of the great University and school of Leyden: 'The principles of its 'founder were those which ought to regu- 'late the practice of all academical patrons. 'He knew that at the rate learning was 'seen prized by the State in the Academy,

'it would be valued by the nation at large.
'In his eyes a University was not merely a
'mouthpiece of necessary instruction, but
'at once a pattern of lofty erudition, and a
'stimulus to its attainment. He knew
'that professors wrought more by example
'and by influence than by teaching; that
'it was theirs to pitch high or low the
'standard of learning in a country. . . .
'With these views Douza proposed to con-
'centrate in Leyden a complement of pro-
'fessors, all illustrious for their learning,
'and if the *most* transcendent erudition
'could not be procured for the University
'with the obligations of teaching, that it
'should still be secured to it without. For
'example, Lipsius, the "Prince of Latin
'"Literature," had retired. Who was to
'succeed him? Joseph Scaliger, the most
'learned man whom the world had ever
'seen, was then living a dependent in the
'family of Rochepozay. He, of all men,
'was, if possible, to be obtained. The
'celebrated Baudius, and Tuningius, pro-
'fessor of civil law, were commissioned to
'proceed as envoys to France with authority
'to tender the appointment, and to ac-
'quiesce in any terms the illustrious scholar
'might propose. Nor was this enough.

'Not only did the curators of the University 'and the municipality of Leyden write in 'the most flattering strain to "the Prince '"of the Literary Senate" urging his 'acquiescence, but also the States of 'Holland, and Maurice of Orange. Nay, 'the States and Stadtholder preferred like-'wise strong solicitations to the King of 'France to employ his influence on their be-'half with the "Phœnix of Europe," which 'the great Henry cordially did. The nego-'tiation succeeded. Leyden was illustrated 'the general standard of learned acquire-'ment in the country and the criterion 'of professorial competency were elevated 'to a lofty pitch; erudition was honoured 'above riches and power, in the person of 'her favourite son. . . . After the death 'of Scaliger, who never taught, the curators 'tried to induce Julius Pacius to accept a 'large salary to become a resident in 'Leyden. But the place of Scaliger was 'to be filled by the only man who may 'contest with him the supremacy of learn-'ing; and Salmasius, who had been in-'vited to Padua, but under the obliga-'tions of lecturing, preferred the literary 'leisure of Leyden with the emoluments 'and honours which its curators and magis-

'tracy lavished on him; simply that, as 'his call declares, "he might improve by '"conversation and stimulate by example '"the learned of the place."'

There is a full-mouthed magnificence about this which is captivating, but perhaps a little deceptive. A Scaliger who does not teach and a Salmasius who only talks are dubious and familiar professorial figures.

Indeed, from the few specimens that have come down to us of the table-talk of Salmasius, it would be uncharitable to believe that in sober truth Leyden was in the least improved by it.

In whom should be the patronage? O, woeful word! How it hurls us from the heights of the ideal we were together seeking to scale. One thing is certain, patronage will be abused if it is not criticised. If the community does not always greatly care, the patrons will soon come not to care at all.

The history of Oxford and Cambridge during the last century proves the result of national indifference. 'I have known a 'profligate debauchee chosen Professor of 'Moral Philosophy, and a fellow who never 'looked upon the stars soberly in his life,

'Professor of Astronomy. We have had 'History Professors who never read any-'thing to qualify them for it but *Tom Thumb*, '*Jack the Giant Killer*, *Don Belianis of Greece*, 'and such-like valuable records. We have 'had likewise numberless Professors of 'Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic who scarce 'understood their mother-tongue, and not 'long ago a famous gamester and stock-'jobber was elected Margaret Professor of 'Divinity' (*Terræ Filius*, 48).

This scandalous record dates, I admit, from 1721, but readers of Porson's Life, and even of Adam Sedgwick's Life, will be able to carry the bad tradition down to our own day.

An ideal patron is perhaps a contradiction in terms, but if it is to be found anywhere it will be, I believe, in a small combination of men of high character, reputation, and general learning, who may be trusted to act independently and judiciously. The head of a political department, a town or county council! *Retro me, Sathanas.* These are patrons that stand self-condemned; they have not the time, the temper, the disposition, or, indeed, any single one of the necessary qualifications. The existing Professors of the University,

though they might well be represented on the Board of Selection, should not have, in an ideal University, a predominant influence upon it, and especially should the Board be confined to one particular University, of whose exclusive interests they should be fiery partisans, and with whose future fortunes and reputation they should be as closely as possible allied.

Having got its professors and teaching-staff, the University has to set them at work in their several faculties; and for this purpose, to settle and resettle courses of study, to arrange classes, to name books, and to establish the machinery intended to help the students through the mazy paths of knowledge. Here, no doubt, difficulties arise and ideals will get entangled. The huge lecture-hall of a Scottish professor, crowded with pupils, who, armed with note-books, follow their favourite through an animated discourse, has played a great part in the national education of a well-educated country. It is different in England.

I shall never forget the surprise with which my father, an old pupil of Chalmers, entered a room in Cambridge where a Professor of Divinity was lecturing a handful of candidates for Anglican Orders.

It certainly was not an animating picture. It did not remind one of Abelard. There was no crowd, no feeling, and yet the lecturer was Lightfoot. I remember telling my father if he really wanted to see high pressure at Cambridge he must seek admission into the parlour in the private house in which the famous Routh was then rattling his pupils, a small transfigured band of future wranglers, along the path of glory.

Dealing here with ideals, I am bound to say an ideal University will keep its teaching as much as possible in its own hands, though whether its classes be large or small must be allowed to depend partly upon the subject which is being taught, partly upon the method of teaching that is being employed, and partly upon the character and genius of the individual teacher. Wherever there is life there is growth, and each soil, we know, has its preference. If only a tree is great and mighty, with deep roots and spreading branches, leafy choirs where the birds may sing, it matters not whether it be oak, elm, or beech.

What, we next ask, are the educational exercises a University should employ to

stimulate the zeal, to awaken the enthusiasm, and test the requirements of its scholars? Two well-worn methods will at once occur to all your minds—examinations and degrees.

Examinations do not stand quite where they did. Robert Lowe, like Queen Anne, is dead. Familiarity with their results has bred a certain measure of contempt for the process. Examiners themselves have turned Queen's evidence, and have held up their hideous vocation to public scorn. But let us beware of the reaction. Against what does the ideal University most fiercely strive? Against presumption, against ignorance, against conceit, against cheap-jacks, quacks, and impostors. Tests and trials, discipline and correction, cross-examination, conviction, sentence, are all necessary parts of a University training. We cannot dispense with examinations—with frequent examinations—though not necessarily or on all occasions public examinations. The most vigorous defence of examinations that I ever came across occurs in a treatise of the celebrated Melancthon. I quote from a translation to be found on p. 768 of Sir William Hamilton's *Discussions:*

'No academical exercise can be more 'useful than that of examination. It 'whets the desire of learning, it enhances 'the solitude of study, while it animates 'the attention to whatever is taught. Every 'student is alarmed, lest aught should 'escape him which it behoves him to 'observe. This anxiety incites him also to 'canvass everything with accuracy, know-'ing that he must fully and perspicu-'ously explain his understanding of each 'several doctrine. In this fear is found the 'strongest stimulus to the labour of learn-'ing; without it study subsides into a cold, 'sleepy, lifeless formality. What we have 'only heard or read come to us like the 'shadows of a dream, and like the shadows 'of a dream depart, but all that we elabo-'rate for ourselves become part and parcel 'of our intellectual possessions. But this 'elaboration is forced upon us by examina-'tion; examination, therefore, may be 'called the life of studies, without which 'reading, and even meditation, is dead. 'Against prejudice and error there is no 'surer antidote than examination; for by 'this the intellect is explored, its wants 'detected and supplied, its faults and fail-'ings corrected. Examination likewise

'fosters facility of expression, counteracts 'perturbation and confusion, inures to cool- 'ness and promptitude of thought. Not 'less useful is examination in restraining 'the course of juvenile study within legiti- 'mate boundaries. Nothing is more hurtful, 'as nothing is more common, than vain 'and tumultuary reading, which inflates 'with the persuasion without conferring 'the reality of erudition. Wherefore, if 'examination brought no other advantage 'than that it counteracts the two greatest 'pests of education, found, indeed, usually 'combined, *sloth* to wit, and *arrogance*, for 'this reason alone should examination be 'cherished in our universities. Against 'sloth there is no goad sharper or more 'efficacious than examination; and as to 'arrogance, examination is the very school 'of humility and improvement. By no 'other discipline is a soaring conceit so 'effectually taken down, and this is the 'reason why self-satisfied pretenders ever 'fly examination, whilst those who think 'less of the little that they know than of 'the much they know not, resort to it as 'the most efficacious means of improve- 'ment.'

One form of examination to which great

importance should, I think, be attached in the ideal University, is that of written composition. This kind of examination is no doubt best conducted in private, but I know of nothing more valuable for the young and ardent soul than to be obliged to submit his written composition to the criticism of a ripe scholar.

In looking back upon my own life at Cambridge, I remember with peculiar pleasure how on two or three occasions (unfortunately they were no more) Professor Seeley did me the kindness of correcting in my presence effusions which I had written for his class. I was abashed, but it is when you are abashed that you learn. It was the only teaching of the kind I got at Cambridge.

Then come the degrees. Degree day must always be a red-letter day in the academical year. Bacon somewhere speaks of the necessity of a few ostentatious feathers. It is, of course, true that universities do not exist in order to bespatter their *Alumni* with letters of the alphabet. That is the function of a Queen's birthday. But man is a competitive animal, nor would history warrant the assertion that he loses any portion of the spirit of strife

and contention whilst he wanders mid the groves of the Academy.

Universities are wise in holding out honours and rewards, both pudding and praise, to the most diligent and successful of their scholars; and so far no better means have been devised for discovering who these are, than by public examinations preceding the conferring of degrees, and determining to some extent the order of merit.

In the University of Louvain, early and long famous for the value of its degrees, nobody was ever plucked. The name of every candidate appeared in the classified list. It was not, however, altogether humanity that prompted this catholicity of treatment. No! such was the interest and feeling prevalent in Louvain in these matters, that whilst those who stood high in the annual lists were accounted as heroes and offered free libations, those who stood low were not infrequently subjected to contumely and public insult.

By whom should these public examinations be conducted? The answer must be by those best qualified to conduct them, after the fashion most calculated to discover knowledge, to discern intelligence, to detect cram, and to expose brawling

ignorance. To reject the teachers as examiners is impossible, to wish to do so would be foolish. No University has ever entertained so uneducated an idea. What is required is to make such a selection of examiners as shall be above suspicion. This is a task that rarely presents the least difficulty. Like the so-called religious difficulty in our primary schools, it is a bugbear of the street, of the platform, of Parliament, not of the class-room or the Senate-house.

The social side of our ideal University is not likely to be forgotten or neglected in this country, where, owing to the fascination exercised over all middle-aged men by Oxford and Cambridge memories, it has become too general to overlook the University in a congeries of colleges. To speak disrespectfully of a college is, in most Englishmen's eyes, as bad as insulting a mother. It is within the crumbling walls of colleges that mind meets with mind, that permanent friendships are formed, habits of early rising contracted, lofty ambitions stirred. It is indeed a great and a stirringt radition. Who does not recall the neat little banquets in the monastic cells? Which of us who is clad

in the sober russet of middle life can gaze without emotion upon the old breakneck staircase in the corner of an ancient quadrangle, where once he kept, and where were housed for a too brief season the bright-coloured, long since abandoned garments of a youth apparently endless, and of hopes that knew no bounds?

In the ideal University there will be academical houses—the sweet community, the eager rivalries, I hope none of the deadly hatreds, of college life. But supreme above her boarding-houses will always tower the ideal University.

I will end where a more dexterous orator probably would have begun, with the site of my ideal University. Much has been written, much can still be written, on this golden theme. Had one the eye of an old Benedictine or Cistercian monk, seeking where to establish a religious house of his Order to the glory of God and the comfort of the brethren, one might enlarge upon soils and prospects, on water meadows and trout streams; dreams of Tintern and of Fountains, of Wye and Tweed might cross the inward eye—that is 'the bliss of soli-'tude'—but standing here where I do in

'Streaming London's central roar,'

amid the huge population of the mightiest and richest, though not the most beautiful or the most beauty-loving city the world has ever known, I have already found the object of my search. When all is said and done, what is more stimulating to the mind of man than the vast tide of population as it pours through the arteries of a great city? Where else in the wide world is there so powerful a magnet as London? Not a day passes but hundreds are drawn within her grasp. Where else are there, can there be, so many young creatures richly endowed with natural gifts capable of cultivation, astir with the uneasiness of youth, seeing 'the vision of the world,' feeling the 'wild pulsation,' hearing 'their 'days before them and the tumult of their 'lives,' and 'yearning for the large excite-'ment that the coming years may yield'?

If ever there was a theatre for academical actors, it is London. If ever there was a people and an age that needed the Higher Education, we are that people, and we live in that age.

V

WALTER BAGEHOT

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT LEIGHTON HOUSE, 5TH MARCH, 1901.

AT the very outset it is proper I should state I never saw Mr. Bagehot. I know him, if I do know him, through his books alone. There are in this room those who knew and loved the living man. His modes of speech, his manners and customs, his ways and habits, how he talked and laughed and held his peace, how he entered a room, how he sat at meat—all the countless pleasant things, the admirable strengths, the agreeable weaknesses that went to make up his personality, they know, and I do not. What a warning to be silent! To put myself even for a few minutes in competition with such memories, such knowledge, seems ridiculous, and yet perhaps it is not so very ridiculous after

all. Unless an English author has had his portrait painted by Reynolds or his life written by Boswell, he has small chance of being remembered (apart from the recollections of a small and ever-dwindling group of friends), save by his books. They are, indeed, his only chance. I do not say it is a good chance. I have fallen asleep over too many books to say that. What I do say is, it is his only chance.

You can know a man from his books, and if he is a writer of good faith and has the knack, you may know him very well; better it well may be than did his co-directors or his partners in business, or, even—for I am here to tell the truth—his own flesh and blood. It is easier for an author to take in his brother than a really astute well-seasoned reader. I am not disposed to think overmuch of the insight of relations. Joseph Bonaparte has left on record his opinion of his famous brother. 'He was,' so said this sapient though not hereditary monarch—'he was not so much 'what I should call a great, as a good 'man.'

It is amazing what things your confirmed author will say in print. The shyest of men when under the literary impulse will

tear down the veils behind which men are usually only too well content to live. Mr. Bagehot has himself said in his own picturesque way, 'We all come down to 'dinner, but each has a room to himself.' In his books an author will often take you into this solitary chamber.

I have enjoyed on rare occasions the conversation of two distinguished poets, Mr. Browning and Mr. Arnold. To both I felt myself under a huge personal obligation. I longed to hear them even distantly approach the subject-matter of *Christmas Eve* or *Rugby Chapel;* they never did in my hearing. 'Hardly,' says Browning, 'will 'a man tell his joys and sorrows, hopes and 'fears, beliefs and unbelievings.' No! a man will not *tell* these things, but if he is a true author he will *print* them.

However, everyone who has read Mr. Bagehot's books will agree at once that he is an author who can be known from his books.

I suppose the only classification of authors of first-rate importance is into good authors and bad ones—a literary, not a moral distinction. But other classifications have their use. There are, for example, personal authors and impersonal ones. A

personal author is not necessarily one who babbles to his readers about himself and his belongings, his likes and dislikes, but he is one whose spirit hovers and broods over his own page; with whose treatise is bound up a living thing. Take an author about whom Mr. Bagehot has written with deep feeling and great acumen, the sombre spirit who composed the *Analogy of Religion* and preached the *Fifteen Sermons*. As Mr. Bagehot has observed, there is no positive direct evidence that Bishop Butler ever spoke to anybody all his life through, except on two occasions to Queen Caroline. You cannot guess what books he had in his library, for he hardly ever makes a quotation. 'No man,' says Mr. Bagehot, 'would ever guess from Butler's writings 'that he ever had the disposal of five 'pounds. It is odd to think what he did 'with the mining profits and landed pro- 'perty, the royalties and rectories, coal-dues 'and curacies, that he must have heard of 'from morning to night.' And yet this reticence and deep shadow of seclusiveness has not availed to hide from the sympathetic reader—despite, too, the clouded difficult style; for, again to quote Bagehot, 'Butler, so far from having the pleasures of

'eloquence, had not even the comfort of per-'spicuity'—a strong, permanent, personal impression of an entirely honest thinker. I feel far more certain that I know what manner of man Butler was, than I do about Saint Augustine, for all his fine *Confessions*.

Mr. Bagehot was a personal author, though he tells us very little directly about himself.

Now, I am going to begin quoting in real earnest.

In the year 1853 Bagehot, who was then twenty-seven years of age, had the courage, for his was a dauntless spirit, to write an essay on Shakespeare; not on his plays, nor on his characters, nor on his sonnets, nor on his investments, but on himself—on Shakespeare. To be able to write a good essay on Shakespeare is in my opinion the best possible test of an English man of letters. Had we an Academy and an examination for admission, no other demand need be made. But who should be the examiners?

Mr. Bagehot began his essay by boldly asserting that it is quite possible to know Shakespeare, and then proceeds:

'Some extreme sceptics, we know, doubt

'if it is possible to deduce anything as to an 'author's character from his works. Yet 'surely people do not keep a tame steam-'engine to write their books, and if these 'books were really written by a man, he 'must have been a man who could write 'them; he must have had the thoughts 'which they express, have acquired the 'knowledge they contain, have possessed 'the style in which we read them. The 'difficulty is a defect of the critics. A 'person who knows nothing of an author 'he has read will not know much of an 'author he has seen.

'First of all, it may be said that Shake-'speare's works could only be produced by 'a first-rate imagination working on a 'first-rate experience. It is often difficult 'to make out whether the author of a 'poetic creation is drawing from fancy or 'drawing from experience; but for art on a 'certain scale the two must concur. Out 'of nothing nothing can be created. Some 'plastic power is required, however great 'may be the material. And when such a 'work as *Hamlet* or *Othello*, still more 'when both of them and others not unequal 'have been created by a single mind, it 'may be fairly said that not only a great

'imagination, but a full conversancy with 'the world, was necessary to their pro- 'duction. The whole powers of man under 'the most favourable circumstances are 'not too great for such an effort. We may 'assume that Shakespeare had a great ex- 'perience.

'To a great experience one thing is 'essential, an experiencing nature. It is 'not enough to have opportunity, it is 'essential to feel it. Some occasions come 'to all men; but to many they are of little 'use, and to some they are none. What, 'for example, has experience done for the 'distinguished Frenchman, the name of 'whose essay is prefixed to this paper? 'M. Guizot is the same man that he was 'in 1820, or, we believe, as he was in 1814. 'Take up one of his lectures, published 'before he was a practical statesman; you 'will be struck with the width of view, the 'amplitude and the solidity of the reflec- 'tions; you will be amazed that a mere 'literary teacher could produce anything so 'wise. But take up afterwards an essay 'published since his fall, and you will be 'amazed to find no more. Napoleon the 'First is come and gone, the Bourbons of 'the old régime have come and gone, the

'Bourbons of the new régime have had
'their turn. M. Guizot has been first
'minister of a citizen king; he has led a
'great party; he has pronounced many a
'great *discours* that was well received by
'the second elective assembly in the world.
'But there is no trace of this in his writings.
'No one would guess from them that their
'author had ever left the professor's chair.
'It is the same, we are told, with small
'matters: when M. Guizot walks the street
'he seems to see nothing; the head is
'thrown back, the eye fixed, and the mouth
'working. His mind is no doubt at work,
'but it is not stirred by what is external.
'Perhaps it is the internal activity of mind
'that overmasters the perceptive power.
'Anyhow, there might have been an *émeute*
'in the street and he would not have
'known it; there have been revolutions in
'his life, and he is scarcely the wiser.
'Among the most frivolous and fickle of
'civilized nations he is alone. They pass
'from the game of war to the game of
'peace, from the game of science to the
'game of art, from the game of liberty to
'the game of slavery, from the game of
'slavery to the game of license. He stands
'like a schoolmaster in the playground,

'without sport and without pleasure, firm 'and sullen, slow and awful' (*Literary Studies*, i. 126-128).

From this quotation we take away the notion of an *experiencing nature*. Shakespeare had what Guizot (it appears), had not, an experiencing nature.

I will now take up Bagehot's essay on Macaulay, written in 1856, when the great history was volume by volume taking the town by storm. It is easier to write well about Macaulay than about Shakespeare, but perhaps it is not so very easy, though it is no longer personally dangerous. I need not premise that Bagehot had an enormous admiration for Macaulay, who supplied him with what a few men love better than their dinner, *intellectual entertainment*. But Bagehot was a critic, and he writes:

'Macaulay has exhibited many high 'attainments, many dazzling talents, much 'singular and well-trained power; but the 'quality which would most strike the 'observers of the interior man is what may 'be called his inexperiencing nature. Men 'of genius are in general distinguished by 'their extreme susceptibility to external 'experience. Finer and softer than other

'men, every exertion of their will, every 'incident of their lives, influences them 'more deeply than it would others. Their 'essence is at once finer and more im- 'pressible; it receives a distincter mark, 'and receives it more easily than the souls 'of the herd. From a peculiar sensibility 'the man of genius bears the stamp of life 'commonly more clearly than his fellows; 'even casual associations make a deep 'impression on him: examine his mind, and 'you may discern his fortunes. Macaulay 'has nothing of this. You could not tell 'what he has been. His mind shows no 'trace of change. What he is, he was; 'and what he was, he is. He early attained 'a high development, but he has not in- 'creased it since; years have come, but 'they have whispered little; as was said of 'the second Pitt, "He never grew, he was '"cast." The volume of speeches which 'he has published place the proof of this 'in every man's hand. His first speeches 'are as good as his last, his last scarcely 'richer than his first. He came into public 'life at an exciting season; he shared of 'course in that excitement, and the same 'excitement still quivers in his mind. He 'delivered marvellous rhetorical exercises

'on the Reform Bill when it passed; he 'speaks of it with rhetorical interest even 'now. He is still the man of '32. From 'that era he looks on the past. . . .

'All this was very natural at the moment. 'Nothing could be more probable than that 'a young man of the greatest talents, enter- 'ing at once into important life at a con- 'spicuous opportunity, should exaggerate 'its importance; he would fancy it was the '"crowning achievement," the greatest '"in the tide of time." But the singularity 'is, that he should retain the idea now; 'that years have brought no influence, 'experience no change. The events of 'twenty years have been full of rich instruc- 'tion on the events of twenty years ago, 'but they have not instructed him. His 'creed is a fixture. It is the same on his 'peculiar topic—on India. Before he went 'there he made a speech on the subject; 'Lord Canterbury, who must have heard a 'million speeches, said it was the best he had 'ever heard. It is difficult to fancy that so 'much vivid knowledge could be gained 'from books, from horrible Indian treatises, 'that such imaginative mastery should be 'possible without actual experience. Not 'forgetting, or excepting, the orations of

'Burke, it was perhaps as remarkable a 'speech as was ever made on India by an 'Englishman who had not been in India. 'Now he has been there he speaks no 'better, rather worse; he spoke excellently 'without experience, he speaks no better 'with it; if anything, it rather puts him out. 'His speech on the Indian charter a year 'or two ago was not finer than that on the 'charter of 1833. Before he went to India 'he recommended that writers should be 'examined in the classics; after being in 'India he recommended that they should 'be examined in the same way. He did 'not say that he had seen the place in the 'meantime; he did not think that had any-'thing to do with it. You could never 'tell from any difference in his style what 'he had seen, or what he had not seen. 'He is so insensible to passing objects that 'they leave no distinctive mark, no intimate 'peculiar trace.

'Such a man would naturally think 'literature more instructive than life. 'Hazlitt said of Mackintosh, "He might '"like to read an *account* of India; but '"India itself, with its burning shining '"face, was a mere blank, an endless '"waste to him. Persons of this class

'"have no more to say to a plain matter
'"of fact staring them in the face, than
'"they have to say to a *hippopotamus*."
'This was a keen criticism on Sir James,
'savouring of the splenetic mind from
'which it came. As a complete estimate it
'would be a most unjust one of Macaulay,
'but we know that there is a whole class of
'minds which prefers the literary delinea-
'tion of objects to the actual eyesight of
'them' (*Literary Studies*, ii. 224-226).

I do not stop to ask whether we ought to agree with this criticism or not, for I have only made use of it to emphasize my earlier quotations, and to make plainer what I mean when, borrowing, as I am now able to do, Bagehot's own words, I say of him, that he most surely had an *experiencing nature*, and impressed the stamp of life on everything he wrote.

This is the reason why Mr. Bagehot is so great a favourite with literary men. Most authors who write books in their libraries cherish at the bottom of their hearts, if not a dislike, at least, a gloomy suspicion, of books and bookishness; they hanker after life—after the hippopotamus. I once took a very considerable author

into a police-court; I thought it might chance to amuse him. He stood entranced whilst some poor ragamuffin's misdemeanours and improprieties were brought home to him, a short sentence passed, and the prisoner led away to a too familiar doom. Then we went out, and no sooner were we in the street than my author smote his staff upon the pavement and bitterly bewailed the hard fate that had prevented his being called to the Bar and becoming a 'Beak.' I gently reminded him of his books, quite a comely row upon the shelf. 'Hang my books!' he cried, waving his stick in the direction of the magistrate's chair. 'When that fellow sends a poor 'devil to prison for six weeks, to prison he 'goes; but when I publish a book, *nothing* '*happens*.'

Mr. Bagehot's books are full of actuality. His pages are so animated that something seems to happen in almost every one of them. The hippopotamus sticks out his head, as does the ox with that wonderful wet nose in the foreground of Rubens' *Nativity* in the Antwerp Gallery.

'The reason why so few good books are 'written is that so few people who can 'write know anything. In general, an

'author has always lived in a room, has 'read books, has cultivated science, is ac- 'quainted with the style and sentiment of 'the best authors, but he is out of the way 'of employing his own eyes and ears. He 'has nothing to hear and nothing to see; 'his life is a vacuum. The mental habits 'of Robert Southey, which about a year 'ago were so extensively praised in the 'public journals, is the type of literary 'existence, just as the praise bestowed on 'it shows the admiration excited by it 'among literary people. He wrote poetry '(as if anybody could) before breakfast; 'he read during breakfast; he wrote his- 'tory until dinner; he corrected proof- 'sheets between dinner and tea; he wrote 'an essay for the *Quarterly* afterwards, and 'after supper, by way of relaxation, com- 'posed the *Doctor*, a lengthy and elaborate 'jest. Now, what can anyone think of 'such a life, except how clearly it shows 'that the habits best fitted for communi- 'cating information, formed with the best 'care and daily regulated by the best 'motives, are exactly the habits which are 'likely to afford a man the least informa- 'tion to communicate? Southey had no 'events, no experiences. His wife kept

'house and allowed him pocket-money, 'just as if he had been a German professor 'devoted to accents, tobacco, and the dates 'of Horace's amours. And it is pitiable 'to think that so meritorious a life was 'only made endurable by a painful delu-'sion. He thought that day by day and 'hour by hour he was accumulating stores 'for the instruction and entertainment of a 'long posterity. His epics were to be in 'the hands of all men, and his history of 'Brazil the "Herodotus of the South 'American Republics." As if his epics 'were not already dead, and as if the people 'who now cheat at Valparaiso care a *real* 'who it was that cheated those before 'them! Yet it was only by a conviction 'like this that an industrious and calli-'graphic man (for such was Robert 'Southey), who might have earned money 'as a clerk, worked all his days for half a 'clerk's wages at occupation much duller 'and more laborious' (*Literary Studies*, i. 137).

But not only is Mr. Bagehot a great favourite with those dignified beings who write books at their leisure in the library, but his works are invariably to be found on the tables of editors, journalists, re-

viewers—the whole fraternity of ready writers, and this for another set of reasons. He is one of those extraordinary men whose remarks are made for the first time. Most of our sayings have been hacked about long before they get into print; an air of staleness clings to them. True it is there is always somebody—may God bless him!—in every audience who may be relied upon never to have heard anything, but for all that, originality is a great quality. Nor does it stop quite there. Mr. Bagehot is not only an original writer, but he presents you with his thoughts and fancies in an unworked state. He is not an artist; he does not stop to elaborate and dress up his material; but having said something which is worth saying and has not been said before, this strange writer is content to pass hurriedly on to say something else. There is more meat on Mr. Bagehot's bones for the critics than on almost anybody else's; hence his extreme utility to the nimble-witted and light-hearted gentry aforementioned. Bagehot crops up all over the country. His mind is lent out; his thoughts toss on all waters; his brew, mixed with a humbler element, may be tapped everywhere; he has made a hundred

small reputations. Nothing would have pleased him better; his fate would have jumped with his ironical humour.

Thus far we have found Mr. Bagehot to possess an experiencing nature, the stamp of life, a *vivida vis* of description, and an observation of mankind, not from the study window or from a club window, but from places where real business is done.

Mr. Bagehot was a mathematician, a moral philosopher, a political economist, a trained, though not a practising, lawyer, a banker, a shipowner, and from 1860 till his too early death in 1877 the editor and manager of the *Economist*. In addition to all this, he was a reader and critic of books.

One of his best known works is a description of the money market he characteristically called *Lombard Street*, because, says he, 'I wish to deal and to show that I 'mean to deal with concrete realities.' The bank-rate was no more of a mystery to him than is the Cabinet to Lord Salisbury; he was quite at home with Foreign Exchanges; he writes as familiarly about the direful suspension of Overend and Gurney as any of you might do about the French Revolution, or the Renaissance, or

the Greek drama; he had mastered the niceties of Conveyancing in the chambers of Sir Charles Hall, and the mysteries of Special Pleading in those of Mr. Justice Quain; and no sooner had he mastered these niceties and mysteries than they were all abolished by Acts of Parliament. Attorneys, he somewhere remarks, are for the world, and the world is for attorneys. The prowling faculties, he thinks, will have their way. In many of his moods Mr. Bagehot was certainly a most mundane person; he had no fine Lucretian contempt for the thousand and one laborious nothings men nickname duties, or for the pursuits of the average man. I cannot say he revered business as did that delightful Mr. Garth in *Middlemarch*, for reverence was a plant of slow growth in Mr. Bagehot's breast; but he always speaks of it, as of all the other concerns of Englishmen, including the House of Lords, with respect tempered by amusement.

The hum of affairs sounds through all his writings. How best is business to be transacted here on this planet, in this country, and to-day? You may know men by their favourite quotations, and a prime favourite with Bagehot is Bishop Butler's

'To such a being as man, in such a world 'as the present.' His famous book on the *Constitution*, though it may require bringing down to date—for the British Constitution has not stood still during the quarter of a century that has slipped away since Mr. Bagehot's lamented death—is full of his characteristics, his lively insight into the actual workings of political machinery, his sense both of the imperfections and of the importance of a working machine, of the advantage of accustoming people to go on doing the same thing in the same way, not because it is the best of all possible ways—*that* it never is—but because 'to 'such a being as man, in such a world as 'this,' a habit and a rule are of the utmost importance.

In all this Mr. Bagehot is mundane—very mundane. He has been called cynical, and if I knew what that word means in our modern usage, I might agree that cynical he was.

But he had another side.

Mr. R. H. Hutton, Mr. Bagehot's great ally, and custodian of his fame, wrote the life of his friend that appears in the second volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, a splendid series of volumes that

has struck a blow at one of our oldest native industries—that of the miscellaneous writer, who, until the completion of this publication, could always turn an honest penny by collecting stray information, from this quarter and from that, about more or less obscure notabilities in our history, and printing it in a magazine, and afterwards, it may be, including it with other trifles in a neat little volume destined to flutter its hour. These great combinations are fatal to the small trader. In the course of this short memoir, Mr. Hutton refers to Mr. Bagehot's obligations to his early friends and teachers — Dr. Prichard, Professor de Morgan, and that fine scholar and stoic Mr. George Long. Their influence, of course, I have no means of tracing. Influences are subtle things, and even in one's own case

> 'Who can point as with a wand,
> And say this portion of the river of my mind
> Came from that fountain?'

There are, however, two men whose influence over Mr. Bagehot's powerful and original mind was all-pervading, *Wordsworth* and *Newman*. He did not become a disciple of either; his was not a disciple's mind. He paid these two great writers a

truer compliment than he would have done had he sunk his individuality into theirs, for he allowed their individualities to colour and temper his own.

I will give an example of the Wordsworth influence. Mr. Bagehot wrote an essay on the *First Edinburgh Reviewers*. He is sympathetic. There was a good deal of the old Whig about him. He occupies some thirteen pages in friendly description of Lord Jeffery and his friends —'men,' so he writes, 'of a cool, moderate, 'resolute firmness, not gifted with high 'imagination, little prone to enthusiastic 'sentiment, heedless of large theories and 'speculations, careless of dreamy scepti-'cism, with a clear view of the next step, 'and a wise intention to take it, a strong 'conviction that the elements of knowledge 'are true, and a steady belief that the 'present world can and should be quietly 'improved.'

What nice people! I hope there are a great many of them in the new London County Council.

But after thirteen pages in praise of the Whigs, Mr. Bagehot grows restive. The sympathetic reader hears afar off the roar of the distant breakers; the tide of the

reaction has set in, for, so it appears, the Whigs hated mysticism. 'Yes,' says *Mr. Bagehot.*

'A clear, precise, discriminating intellect 'shrinks at once from the symbolic, the 'unbounded, the indefinite. *The misfor-* '*tune is that mysticism is true.* There cer- 'tainly are kinds of truth, borne in, as it 'were, instinctively on the human intellect, 'most influential on the character and the 'heart, yet hardly capable of stringent 'statement, difficult to limit by an elabo- 'rate definition. Their course is shadowy; 'the mind seems rather to have seen than 'to see them, more to feel after than defi- 'nitely apprehend them. They commonly 'involve an infinite element, which, of 'course, cannot be stated precisely, or else 'a first principle—an original tendency— 'of our intellectual constitution, which it is 'impossible not to feel, and yet which it 'is hard to extricate in terms and words. 'Of this latter kind is what has been called 'the religion of nature, or, most exactly, 'perhaps, the religion of the imagination. 'This is an interpretation of the world. 'According to it the beauty of the universe 'has a meaning, its grandeur a soul, its 'sublimity an expression. As we gaze on

'the faces of those whom we love . . . as
'a charm and a thrill seem to run along
'the tone of a voice, to haunt the mind
'with a mere word; so in nature the mys-
'tical sense finds a motion in the mountain,
'and a power in the waves, and a meaning
'in the long white line of the shore, and a
'thought in the blue of heaven, an un-
'bounded being in the vast, void air, and

'"Wakeful watchings in the pointed stars."

'There is a philosophy in this which might
'be explained, if explaining were to our
'purpose. But be this as it may, it is
'certain that Mr. Wordsworth preached
'this kind of religion and that Lord Jeffrey
'did not believe a word of it. His cool,
'sharp, collected mind revolted from its
'mysticism; his detective intelligence was
'absorbed in its apparent fallaciousness;
'his light humour made sport with the
'sublimities of the preacher; his love of
'perspicuity was vexed by its indefinite-
'ness; the precise philosopher was amazed
'at its mystic unintelligibility. Yet we do
'not mean that in this great literary feud
'either of the combatants had all the right
'or gained all the victory. The world has
'given judgment. Both Mr. Wordsworth

'and Lord Jeffrey have received their 'reward. The one had his own genera- 'tion, the laughter of men, the applause of 'drawing-rooms, the concurrence of the 'crowd; the other a succeeding age, the 'fond enthusiasm of secret students, the 'lonely rapture of lonely minds. And each 'has received according to his kind. If all 'cultivated men speak differently because 'of the existence of Wordsworth and Cole- 'ridge, if not a thoughtful English book 'has appeared for forty years without some 'trace for good or evil of their influence, 'if sermon-writers subsist upon their 'thoughts, if "sacred poets" thrive by 'translating their weaker portion into the 'speech of women, if, when all this is over, 'some sufficient part of their writing will 'ever be fitting food for wild musing and 'solitary meditation, surely this is because 'they possessed the inner nature—"an in- '"tense and glowing mind," "the vision '"and the faculty divine." But if, per- 'chance, in their weaker moments the 'great authors of the *Lyrical Ballads* did 'ever imagine that the world was to pause 'because of their verses, that *Peter Bell* 'would be popular in drawing-rooms, 'that *Christabel* would be perused in the

'City, that people of fashion would make 'a handbook of the *Excursion*, it was well 'for them to be told at once that this was 'not so. Nature ingeniously prepared a 'shrill, artificial voice, which spoke in 'season and out of season, enough, and 'more than enough, what will ever be the 'idea of the cities of the plain concerning 'those who live alone among the moun-'tains; of the frivolous concerning the 'grave; of the gregarious concerning the 'recluse; of those who laugh concerning 'those who laugh not; of the common con-'cerning the uncommon; of those who lend 'on usury concerning those who lend not; 'the notion of the world of those whom it 'will not reckon among the righteous. It 'said, "This won't do!" And so in all 'time will the lovers of polished Liberalism 'speak concerning the intense and lonely 'prophet' (*Literary Studies*, i. 26).

As for Newman, Mr. Bagehot must have had the *Parochial Sermons* by heart. Two of the most famous, entitled, *The Invisible World* and the *Greatness and Littleness of Human Life*, seem to have become incorporate with Mr. Bagehot's innermost nature. They are not obviously congruous with his pursuits. What have bankers to

do with the invisible world? One has heard of the Divine Economy, but that is something different from the *Economist*. However, there these sermons are, underneath his mundaneness, his humorous treatment of things, his aloofness from all ecclesiasticisms. He wrote about *Lombard Street* like a lover, about the *British Constitution* like a polished Member of Parliament, about the gaiety of *Sir John Falstaff* like a humorist. 'If,' says he, 'most men were 'to save up all the gaiety of their whole 'lives, it would come about to the gaiety 'of one speech on Falstaff.' There's a banker's balance for you! But amidst it all, ever and anon

> 'From the soul's subterranean depths upborne,
> As from an infinitely distant land,
> Come airs and floating echoes'

of the *Invisible World* and the *Greatness and Littleness of Human Life*.

For example, all of a sudden in the middle of an article on that most charming, touching, sincere poet Béranger, we come upon this:

'This shrewd sense gives a solidity to 'the verses of Béranger which the social 'and amusing sort of poetry commonly

'wants, but nothing can redeem it from the 'reproach of wanting *back* thought. This 'is inevitable in such literature; as it pro- 'fesses to delineate for us the light essence 'of a fugitive world, it cannot be expected 'to dwell on those deep and eternal prin- 'ciples on which that world is based. It 'ignores them, as light talk ignores them. 'The most opposite thing to the poetry of 'Society is the poetry of inspiration. There 'exists, of course, a kind of imagination 'which detects the secrets of the universe '—which fills us sometimes with dread, 'sometimes with hope—which awakens the 'soul, which makes pure the feelings, 'which explains Nature, reveals what is 'above Nature, chastens "the deep heart '"of man." Our senses teach us what 'the world is, our intuitions where it is. 'We see the blue and gold of the world, 'its lively amusements, its gorgeous if 'superficial splendour, its currents of men; 'we feel its light spirits, we enjoy its hap- 'piness; we enjoy it; and we are puzzled. 'What is the object of all this? Why do 'we do all this? What is the universe '*for*? Such a book as Béranger's suggests 'this difficulty in its strongest form. It 'embodies the essence of all that pleasure-

'loving, pleasure-giving, unaccountable 'world in which men spend their lives; 'which they are compelled to live in, but 'which the moment you get out of it seems 'so odd, that you can hardly believe it is 'real. On this account, as we were saying 'before, there is no book the impression of 'which varies so much in different moods 'of mind. Sometimes no reading is so 'pleasant, at others you half despise and 'half hate the idea of it; it seems to sum up 'and make clear the littleness of your own 'nature' (*Literary Studies*, ii. 294).

I always thought this bit of Newmanism singularly out of place in an essay on Béranger, whose view of the strange world and bewildering events he was condemned to live in and among was quite free from frivolity; but Bagehot was too much of a moral and political philosopher, too much also of a banker, to be perfect as a critic of literature. It is very delightful to have a man of affairs writing about books. It is most refreshing and invigorating as well as unusual, but, of course, qualities have their defects. Mr. Bagehot is too much alive to the risks of the social structure, far too anxious lest any convention on which it seems to rest should be injured in

the handling, to be quite at his ease on the pleasant slopes of Parnassus. For example, he never cared for *Tristram Shandy*, which, he thought, should be read in extracts. He calls it an indecent novel written by a clergyman. Had Sterne been in the diocese of Barchester in Mrs. Proudie's time, that would have been her view of *Tristram Shandy*. I can see her now wagging a forefinger, and hear her saying: 'Surely, surely!' And she would have been quite right in saying what she said. But Mr. Bagehot will have it that *Tristram* is not a first-class book, and hurls at its head an epithet that has now lost all its terrors; he calls it 'provincial.'

I am not here to defend *Tristram Shandy*. It is indecent, but 'surely, surely' Archdeacon Paley was no more an indecent man than Archdeacon Grantley, and the author of the *Evidences of Christianity* declared that the *summum bonum* of human existence was to sit still and read *Tristram Shandy*. I shelter myself behind Archdeacon Paley.

A strain of very severe morality runs through all Mr. Bagehot's literary criticism. It is noticeable in his reviews of Thackeray and Dickens. I have no quarrel with it.

I have heard Mr. Bagehot called a paradoxical writer. This is absurd. A paradoxical talker he may have been. Conversation without paradox is apt to be dull as still champagne, but in his considered writings, after he had outgrown his boyish ὑβρις, a love of the truth is conspicuous throughout. He is pre-eminently a sensible, truthful man. But, there is the rub; he hated dulness, apathy, pomposity, the time-worn phrase, the greasy platitude. His writings are an armoury of offensive weapons against pompous fools. The revenge taken by these paltry, meaningless persons is to hiss *paradox* whenever the name of their tormentor is mentioned.

Mr. Bagehot, in fact, possessed in large measure a quality he greatly admired, and with his usual happy gift of nomenclature called *animated moderation*. In his little book *Physics and Politics* he writes:

'If anyone were asked to describe what it 'is which distinguishes the writings of a man 'of genius, who is also a great man of the 'world, from all other writings, I think he 'would use the words, "animated modera-' "tion." He would say that such writings 'are never slow, are never expansive, are 'never exaggerated; that they are always

'instinct with judgment, and yet that 'judgment is never a dull judgment; that 'they have as much spirit in them as 'would go to make a wild writer, and yet 'that every line of them is the product of 'a sane and sound writer. The best and 'almost perfect instance of this in English 'is Scott. Homer was perfect in it, as far 'as we can judge. Shakespeare is often 'perfect in it for long together; though, 'then, from the defects of a bad education 'and a vicious age, he loses himself in 'excesses. Still, Homer and Shakespeare 'at his best, and Scott, though in other 'respects so unequal to them, have this 'remarkable quality in common: this union 'of life with measure, of spirit with reason-'ableness.'

Without stopping to compare Bagehot's books with the *Iliad*, with Shakespeare or with Scott, I may safely add their author to the list of 'animated moderators.' He is vivacious, witty, full of comparisons and examples, all colloquial, familiar; but he is never a wild writer, always sober however convivial, and a sensible man, whose definition of style was to write like a human being.

A most agreeable trait of his writings is

his freehandedness. He practises no small economies, he makes you free of his house and table; he does not, as do some mercantile authors, hand you things across a counter. I have already referred to this characteristic, but I return to it because it is so agreeable. He writes like a gentleman. And not only is Mr. Bagehot freehanded, he is also full of pleasant surprises and delectable speculations. He leads you into a pleasant country, and delights you with a variegated landscape. Thus, in the book just mentioned, *Physics and Politics*, you suddenly encounter a most agreeable speculation as to how it happens that different styles of writing are fashionable at different times.

'The true explanation is, I think, some-
'thing like this. One considerable writer
'gets a sort of start, because what he
'writes is somewhat more—only a little
'more very often, as I believe—congenial
'to the minds around him than any other
'sort. This writer is very often not the
'one whom posterity remembers, not the
'one who carries the style of the age
'farthest towards its ideal type, and gives
'it its charm and its perfection. It was not
'Addison who began the essay-writing of

'Queen Anne's time, but Steele; it was the
'vigorous forward man who struck out the
'rough notion, though it was the wise and
'meditative man who improved upon it
'and elaborated it, and whom posterity
'reads. Some strong writer, or group of
'writers, thus seize on the public mind,
'and a curious process soon assimilates
'other writers in appearance to them. To
'some extent, no doubt, this assimilation is
'effected by a process most intelligible
'and not at all curious, the process of con-
'scious imitation. A sees that B's style of
'writing answers, and he imitates it. But
'definitely-aimed mimicry like this is always
'rare; original men who like their own
'thoughts, do not willingly clothe them in
'words they feel they borrow. No man,
'indeed, can think to much purpose when
'he is studying to write a style not his
'own. After all, very few men are at all
'equal to the steady labour, the stupid and
'mistaken labour mostly, of *making* a style.
'Most men catch the words that are in the
'air, and the rhythm which comes to them
'they do not know from whence; an uncon-
'scious imitation determines their words,
'and makes them say what of themselves
'they would never have thought of saying.

'Everyone who has written in more than 'one newspaper knows how invariably his 'style catches the tone of another, when in 'turn he begins to write for that. He 'probably would rather write the traditional 'style to which the readers of the journal 'are used, but he does not set himself to 'copy it; he would have to force himself in 'order *not* to write it, if that was what he 'wanted. Exactly in this way, just as a 'writer for a journal without a distinctly 'framed purpose gives the readers of the 'journal the sort of words and the sort of 'thoughts they are used to, so on a larger 'scale, the writers of an age, without think-'ing of it, give to the readers of the age the 'sort of words and the sort of thoughts— 'the special literature, in fact—which those 'readers like and prize. And not only does 'the writer, without thinking, choose the 'sort of style and meaning which are most 'in vogue, but the writer is himself chosen. 'A writer does not begin to write in the 'traditional rhythm of an age unless he 'feels, or fancies he feels, a sort of aptitude 'for writing it; any more than a writer 'tries to write in a journal in which the 'style is uncongenial or impossible to him. 'Indeed, if he mistakes, he is soon weeded

'out; the editor rejects, the age will not 'read, his compositions. How painfully 'this traditional style cramps great writers 'whom it happens not to suit is curiously 'seen in Wordsworth, who was bold 'enough to break through it, and, at the 'risk of contemporary neglect, to frame a 'style of his own. But he did so know-'ingly, and he did so with an effort.'

As Mr. Bagehot's life advanced ill-health came to live with him; and to a man of his vivacity, adaptability and undying curiosity, it must have been hard whilst still in the middle passage of life to scent the night air; but there are few traces of despondency to be found in his writings. I can call to mind but one; it occurs in *Physics and Politics*, where he says: 'What 'writers are expected to write they write, 'or else they do not write at all, but, like 'the writer of these lines, stop discouraged, 'live disheartened and die, leaving frag-'ments which their friends treasure but a 'rushing world never heeds.'

Die Mr. Bagehot did in his fifty-first year, and it is easy to understand how a man of his grasp and scope would be disposed to cast an almost contemptuous glance upon his actual intellectual output.

Well can I fancy his saying, 'Call you '*that* a life's work?' 'The petty done, 'the undone vast' form a contrast Mr. Bagehot was the last man in the world to forget. But books, like their authors, have strange fates, and Mr. Bagehot's books have a destiny yet unfulfilled.

His first volume of collected essays, published in 1858 under the odd title *Estimates of some Englishmen and Scotchmen*, attracted the attention of a very few; but the same essays, when reprinted after his death with additions in two volumes and called *Literary Studies*, reached a large number of readers, many of whom belonged to the predatory classes, who read books to make use of them. All Mr. Bagehot's other books had, considering their subjects, a really great sale. My copy of *Lombard Street* is, I notice, in the eighth edition. In the United States a large Insurance Company presented all their policy-holders with a complete set of Mr. Bagehot's works, printed and carefully revised (he was a somewhat careless writer) for the occasion. This I have been told on high authority. The special edition I have never seen. The example is one to be commended.

It can therefore hardly be said that the

rushing world has paid no heed to what Mr. Bagehot humbly called his fragments. His friends still treasure them, but the popular judgment is likely to prove on their side. It is not wise to despise the popular judgment. Mr. Bagehot writes of John Austin: 'Mr. Austin was always 'talking of the formidable community of 'fools.' He had no popularity, little wish for popularity, little respect for popular judgment. This is a great error. The world is often wiser than any philosopher. 'There is someone,' said a great man of the world, 'wiser than Voltaire and wiser 'than Napoleon; *c'est tout le monde.*'

Give the world time and it will be right, and the last person it will willingly forget is a writer like Mr. Bagehot, who loved life better than books.

Doubtless Mr. Bagehot's delightful humoursomeness has a little interfered with his reputation as a philosopher, moral and political. It is a great shame, but one always remembers the playfulness of a writer—some purely human touch of his—so much better than one does his philosophy or history. Mr. Bagehot in his essay on Lord Althorp has said some really excellent things about the great Reform Bill—things any

man is the better for remembering; but the thing I always remember is the reason he gives for Lord Althorp's leaving off hunting after his wife's death, a loss he felt with terrible keenness. 'He gave up,' says Mr. Bagehot, 'not only society, which 'was no great trial, but also hunting, not 'because he believed it to be wrong, but 'because he did not think it seemly or suit-'able that a man after such a loss should 'be so very happy *as he knew hunting would 'make him.*'

No one but Bagehot could have given this sentence the peculiar twist it now possesses.

How admirable, too, is his well-known jest, 'A man's mother is his misfortune; 'his wife is his fault;' yet in a philosopher and economist such merriment is dangerous. But humour—particularly when it is good-humour—though it may sometimes get in a man's way, is never a permanent obstacle to his fame.

My time is up, and I have said very little. My object was not to give a précis of Mr. Bagehot's books—that must have been dull—or to assign him his true place in the providential order of the world—that would have been impertinent—but merely

to shake the tree, so that you might see for yourselves, as the fruit fell from it, what a splendid crop it bears.

To know Walter Bagehot through his books is one of the good things of life.

VI

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

(1895)

It is part of the melancholy of middle age that it dooms us to witness one by one the extinguishment of the lights that cast their radiance over youth. When I was at Cambridge, in the very early seventies, the men we most discussed were Newman, Froude, Carlyle, and Ruskin—Tennyson, Browning, and Matthew Arnold. The names of Swinburne and George Meredith were indeed hotly canvassed by a few, but neither of these distinguished men was then well enough known to youngsters to allow of general conversation about their merits. To have read *The Shaving of Shagpat*, *Rhoda Fleming*, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, was to betray a curious taste, and a desire to be wise above your fellows, while Mr. Swinburne's splendid

verses were at that time the badge of a coterie. So it was about the names I have mentioned the battle raged most furiously; and of them all, but one is left.*

Nor can it be said—death makes no difference. When a great writer whose books we read as they came forth warm from his heart goes over to the majority, he does not forthwith join the ranks of the dead but sceptred sovereigns who rule us from their urns. To those who come after him he may or may not be able to make out a title to possession of their memories; but for us the personal note, the emotion once awakened by the living voice, interferes with a cool, literary judgment. The Johnson of Boswell is known to us all; but he is not the Johnson of Bennet Langton, or Beauclerk, or Levett. A single interview, had we ever had one, with the sage in Bolt Court would put Boswell out, and to that extent destroy the purely literary impression of the world's greatest biography. The charm for us about the men I have named is that they and we were alive at the same time.

Mr. Froude's death is a personal infliction upon the Old World and the New.

* None now.

He had many friends, and not a few enemies, in both hemispheres. He was a strenuous man who enjoyed himself in many ways, and could adapt himself to a great variety of circumstance. With sorrow he was indeed well acquainted—he knew what it was to be both bitterly disappointed and cruelly wounded. He carried about with him in all his wanderings much sad human experience; his philosophy of life was more sombre than sweet. I do not think anybody who knew him would describe him as a happy man. But for all that he managed to enjoy himself heartily enough.

'The storm has passed away, the dripping trees are sparkling in the warm and watery sunset. Back, then, to our inn, where dinner waits for us—the choicest of our own trout, pink as salmon with the milky curd in them, and no sauce to spoil the delicacy of their flavour. Then bed, with its lavender-scented sheets and white curtains, and sleep—sound sweet sleep that loves the country village and comes not near a London bedroom' (*Short Studies*, Fourth Series, p. 351).

And his enjoyment of books, if they were the right sort, was as keen as his

love of a trout-stream. He was an old-fashioned scholar who read books for fun or to find reasons for his preconceptions, or (it may be) stones with which to pelt his enemies. The note of personal enjoyment or eager animosity runs through most of his 'writings.' Just before starting for South Africa he bethinks himself of what Aristotle and Goethe have said about Euripides, and how, ever since Oxford and 'the statutory four plays,' he had left Euripides unread, and so he slips him into a coat-pocket, and 'for six weeks Euripides 'became an enchanter for me, and the 'Grecian world was raised from the dead 'into a moonlight visibility with softest 'lights, and shadows black as Erebus.'

Here in foggy London he would sit the live-long day reading with unflagging zest those tremendous folios, the *Historia sui Temporis* of Thuanus, the book Johnson regretted he had never translated. Froude may have hated correcting proofs or groping among manuscripts at Hatfield, but he loved reading about men and women, and never wearied of repeopling the silent past.

'For the mere hard purposes of history, 'the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the most 'effective books which ever were written.

'We see the hall of Menelaus, we see the 'garden of Alcinous, we see Nausicaa 'among her maidens on the shore, we see 'the mellow monarch sitting with ivory 'sceptre in the market-place dealing out 'genial justice. Or, again, when the wild 'mood is on, we can hear the crash of the 'spears, the rattle of the armour as the 'heroes fall, and the plunging of the horses 'among the slain. Could we enter the 'palace of an old Ionian lord we know 'what we should see there; we know the 'words in which he would address us. 'We could meet Hector as a friend. If 'we could choose a companion to spend 'an evening with over a fireside, it would 'be the man of many counsels, the hus-'band of Penelope' (*Short Studies*, i., p. 332).

With all his faults thick as autumn leaves upon him, Froude was a great writer well equipped to play a great part. It may be his fate to stand corrected, just as it is Freeman's fate to be superseded, but he will long continue to be read—who can doubt it?—not merely for the vivacity of his too often misleading descriptions and for the masculine vigour of his style, but for the interest of his peculiar point of

view, the piquancy of his philosophy, the humour of his commentary, for his quick insight into certain phases of faith and shades of character. And, when all is said and done, these things are at least as interesting as anything else. Never let us speak disrespectfully of accuracy, of research, of stern veracity, of unbiassed judgments, or lightly confer the grave title of historian upon hasty rhetoricians who have refused to take pains; but the fact remains that for the ordinary thinking man who has taken his degree, an ounce of mother-wit is often worth a pound of clergy, and that even the so-called history of an inaccurate genius may be not only more amusing but more profitable reading than the blameless work of a duller nature.

The first thing that must strike the mind of anyone who looks at Froude's writings as a whole is their amazing sameness of object, or, at all events, point of view. It is always the same nail he is hammering on the head. It reminds one of Pope's ruling passion. It crops up everywhere and at all times, firing his zeal wherever he is. What is that object? Why, to counteract what he calls 'the

'Counter-Reformation;' to denounce monkery; to unfrock priests by stripping them of all sacramental pretensions; to topple over everything standing between man and the Force which called him into being; to preach good works and plain homespun morality. This was Froude's work from 1849 to 1894. If only he was about this business he did not mind blundering about his facts; a misquotation or two never disturbed his night's rest. He wanted to get at men's minds, not to store their memories. Sacerdotalism, whether enthroned in the Vatican or burning borrowed candles in Lambeth, was the enemy at whose head he aimed his blows. It was for this he wrote his *History* in twelve octavo volumes. Had Henry VIII. not chanced to be the majestic lord who broke the bonds of Rome and married a wife in spite of a Pope, Froude would have left him severely alone; but doing what Henry did, Froude put on his royal livery, and did him suit and service, striking on his behalf many a cruel and one or two unmanly blows. His excuse must be his devouring hate. With him the sermon was always more important than the text. In his secret soul we

suspect Froude cared no more for Henry than Carlyle did for Frederick.

James Anthony Froude was born in Devonshire in 1818. From his two early books, *Shadows of the Clouds* (1847), and *The Nemesis of Faith* (1849), which are clearly in part autobiography, we carry away a rather disagreeable impression of his youth. His father, Archdeacon Froude, was a masterful Anglican of the old high-and-dry school, who thought doubts ill-bred and Nonconformity vulgar. The doors of his rectory were not open to free currents of opinion. He had no copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress* in his library. The eldest son, the brilliant and short-lived Hurrell, took to High Churchism and the cult of the royal martyr as some boys take to drink; and having turned it into a hobby-horse, rode merrily away. The youngest son, though very impressionable to personal influences, was cast in a different mould; and from the moment when he first realized that Anglicanism was not everything, began to be uncomfortable in an atmosphere of priests, parishioners, and penny clubs. A painful struggle began, and the choice between wounding a father's feelings and choking his own thoughts had to be made.

When we recall how Thomas Arnold was induced to believe it wicked to entertain a doubt as to the existence of a triune God, we need not wonder that an imperious archdeacon and a friendly bishop managed, by a judicious mixture of kicks and kisses, to wheedle a young man of vague opinions and no excessive scrupulosity of disposition into Holy Orders. Froude, it is tolerably plain, never loved the Church of England. Years after Newman had left the English Episcopal Church, he was able to write with a sad sincerity: 'Can I wipe out from 'my memory or wish to wipe out those 'happy Sunday mornings, light or dark, 'year after year, when I celebrated your 'communion rite in my own Church of 'St. Mary's, and in the pleasantness and 'joy of it heard nothing of the strife of 'tongues which surrounded its walls.' Froude entertained no such fine feelings. He had been kidnapped into the ministry. When the time came to regain his freedom, he leapt for joy. 'My living is resigned, 'my employment gone. I am again free, 'again happy; and all the poor and paltry 'network in which I was entangled, the 'weak intrigues which, like the flies in 'summer, irritate far worse than more

'serious evils—I have escaped them all. '. . . All I really grieve for is my father' (*The Nemesis of Faith*, p. 76).

It is certainly difficult to discover in Froude's writings any traces of departed fervour or unction; and yet if he never had any, how are we to account for his close relations with Newman, and his share, such as it was, in the *Lives of the Saints?*

In the earlier of the two sketches which make up the little book *Shadows of the Clouds*, which was published anonymously in 1847, and gave great annoyance to the archdeacon, Froude boldly deals with the subject of the *Lives of the Saints:*

'I thought you knew me too well to be 'surprised at my taking to the *Lives of the* '*Saints*, taking to anything that offered 'itself. You know I affect to be a philo-'sopher, who does not believe that truth 'ever shows herself completely in either of 'the rival armies that claim so loudly to be 'her champions. She seems to me to lie 'like the tongue of the balance, only kept 'in the centre by the equipoise of contend-'ing forces, or, rather, if I may use a 'better illustration, like a boat in a canal 'drawn forward by a rope from both sides; 'which appear as if they would negative

'each other, and yet produce only a uniform 'straightforward motion. I throw myself 'on this side or on that, as I please, with-'out fear of injuring her. The thought of 'the great world sweeps on its own great 'road, but it is its own road; quite an 'independent one, not in the least re-'sembling that which Catholic or Pro-'testant, Roundhead or Cavalier, have 'carved out for it.'

This is not a very pious passage, and I find it impossible to believe that Froude's Neo-Catholicism was ever more than a piece of eclecticism, a boyish tribute to Newman, whose voice never ceased to echo through the chambers of his old disciple's memory. A visit to Ireland, paid just after his degree, introduced Froude for the first time in his life to Evangelicalism, as it was called; that Evangelicalism for which, so Newman tells us in his *Apologia*, he had learned to entertain a profound contempt, but which affected his young associate very differently. In Ireland Froude met men 'who had gone through as many, 'as various, and as subtle Christian ex-'periences as the most developed saint in 'the Catholic calendar. I saw it in their 'sermons, in their hymns, in their conver-

'sation.' He tells us of a clergyman, afterwards a bishop in the Irish Church, who declared in his hearing that the theory of a Christian priesthood was a fiction; that the notion of the Sacraments, as having a mechanical efficacy, irrespective of their conscious effect upon the mind of the receiver, was an idolatrous superstition; that the Church was a human institution; that it might have bishops in England, and dispense with bishops in Scotland and Germany; that a bishop was merely an officer; that the apostolical succession was probably false as a fact, and if a fact, implied nothing but historical continuity. Froude listened to these blasphemies without terror, and returned to Oxford to take up his residence as a Fellow, convinced at least of this, that a holy life was no monopoly of the sacramental theory. It was now a mere question of time when Froude should run off the Catholic rails. He read Carlyle's *French Revolution*, and contrasted the Scottish author with the Oxford one. 'For the first time now it 'was brought home to me that two men 'may be as sincere, as faithful, as uncom- 'promising, and yet hold opinions far 'asunder as the poles. I have before said

'that I think the moment of this conviction 'is the most perilous crisis of our lives; 'for myself it threw me at once on my own 'responsibility, obliged me to look for 'myself at what men said, instead of simply 'accepting all because they said it' (*The Nemesis of Faith*, p. 156).

There is something childish, almost despicable, in the system of education which in the case of so clever a man as Froude postponed this discovery so long. Before many days were over J. A. Froude was a heretic. What faith was he now to pursue? Positive theological opinions were evidently out of his beat. He might admire his Irish friends and their beauty of holiness, but the Evangelical doctrine of the Atonement would have proved as much a stumbling-block as the miracle of the Mass. Froude's historical imagination came to his assistance. A Devonshire man, he was English to the core, and having quarrelled with priests and popes, his thoughts turned to the great discomfiture which befell priests and popes at the Reformation. He very quickly grew excited. He had early perceived that the object of the Oxford tract writers was to unprotestantize England—to make John Bull once more a

Catholic, full of reverence for saints and shrines and priests and mysteries; or, as he says in *The Nemesis of Faith*, p. 151, 'to 'make England cease to produce great 'men, as we count greatness—and for 'poetry, courage, daring enterprise, resolu-'tion, and broad honest understanding, 'substitute devotion, endurance, humility, 'self-denial, sanctity and faith.' This is to put the case fairly enough, and thence-forward Froude was before everything else a Protestant, preaching a broad Protestant John Bullism as opposed to Catholic piety and submission. Theology, properly so called, he abandoned, though as he grew older and became more conservative he discouraged free thought, and regretted the days when plain people took their creed from their parson just as they did their meat from their butcher, with only a very occasional threat of changing their custom. In scientific research and the origin of species he simply took no interest whatever. He would have us believe that his faith in the Judge of all the earth was unwavering, but his readers will find it hard to recall to mind any passage which even approaches the tone or temper of devotional religion. Certainly, on the

whole Froude's antipathies seem stronger than his affections.

Once rid of his orders and deprived of his fellowship, Froude naturally turned to literature, and to literature on its historical side. He had from the first a passion for expressing himself forcibly and clearly. 'Oh, how I wish I could write! I try 'sometimes; for I seem to feel myself over-'flowing with thoughts, and I cry out to 'be relieved of them. But it is so stiff 'and miserable when I get anything done. 'What seemed so clear and liquid comes 'out so thick, stupid, and frost-bitten, that 'I myself, who put the idea there, can 'hardly find it for shame if I go look for 'it a few days after.' The man who could write thus was bound ultimately to succeed; and by dint of taking pains Froude obtained the mastery of his pen, and for the last forty years of his life was a great though very careless artist in words.

The growing devotion to Carlyle was a little puzzling, and in the opinion of some keen though unfriendly critics, who had good opportunities of judging, not wholly free from affectation. His talk of 'the piety 'of Oliver and the grandeur of Calvin' does not carry conviction with it. It was

Carlyle's humour to fancy himself a Puritan, and he perhaps was one to this extent, that he would not allow anyone but himself a tirade against 'old Jews' clothes'; but how did Froude squeeze himself into that galley?

The true Froude, that is, the Froude apart from his animosities and pet foes, is to be found in such passages as these:

'We should draw no horoscopes; we 'should expect little, for what we expect 'will not come to pass. Revolutions, re-'formations—those vast movements into 'which heroes and saints have flung them-'selves, in the belief that they were the 'dawn of the millennium—have not borne 'the fruit which they looked for. Mil-'lenniums are still far away. These great 'convulsions leave the world changed, per-'haps improved, but not improved as the 'actors in them hoped it would be. Luther 'would have gone to work with less heart 'could he have foreseen the Thirty Years' 'War, and in the distance the theology of 'Tübingen. Washington might have hesi-'tated to draw the sword against England 'could he have seen the country which he 'made, as we see it now' (February, 1864; *Short Studies*, vol. i., p. 28).

'The mythic element cannot be elimi-
'nated out of history. Men who play
'leading parts on the world's stage gather
'about them the admiration of friends and
'the animosity of disappointed rivals or
'political enemies. The atmosphere be-
'comes charged with legends of what they
'have said or done—some inventions, some
'distortions of facts, but rarely or never
'accurate. Their outward acts, being
'public, cannot be absolutely misstated;
'their motives, being known only to them-
'selves, are an open field for imagination;
'and as the disposition is to believe evil
'rather than good, the portraits drawn may
'vary indefinitely, according to the sym-
'pathies of the describer, but are seldom
'too favourable. The more distinguished
'a man is the more he is talked about.
'Stories are current about him in his own
'lifetime, guaranteed apparently by the
'highest authorities; related, insisted upon;
'time, place, and circumstance accurately
'given — most of them mere malicious
'lies; yet, if written down to reappear in
'memoirs a hundred years hence, they are
'likely to pass for authentic, or, at least,
'probable. Even where there is no malice,
'imagination will still be active.

'People believe or disbelieve, repeat or 'suppress, according to their own inclina-'tions; and death, which ends the feuds of 'unimportant persons, lets loose the tongues 'over the characters of the great. Kings 'are especially sufferers; when alive they 'hear only flattery; when they are gone 'men revenge themselves by drawing 'hideous portraits of them; and the more 'distinguished they may have been, the 'more minutely their weaknesses are dwelt 'upon. "C'est un plaisir indicible," says 'Voltaire, "de donner des décrets contre '"des souverains morts quand ou ne peut '"en lancer contre eulx de leur vivant de '"peur de perdre ses oreilles." The dead 'sovereigns go their way. Their real work 'for good or evil lives after them, but they 'themselves are where the opinions ex-'pressed about their character affect them 'no more. To Cæsar or Napoleon it 'matters nothing what judgment the world 'passes upon their conduct. It is of more 'importance for the ethical value of history 'that acts which as they are related appear 'wicked should be duly condemned, that 'acts which are represented as having 'advanced the welfare of mankind should 'be duly honoured, than that the real

'character of individuals should be cor-
'rectly appreciated.

'To appreciate any single man with
'complete accuracy is impossible. To
'appreciate him even proximately is ex-
'tremely difficult. Rulers of kingdoms may
'have public reasons for what they do,
'which at the time may be understood or
'allowed for. Times change, and new in-
'terests rise. The circumstances no longer
'exist which would explain their conduct.
'The student looks, therefore, for an ex-
'planation in elements, which he thinks he
'understands — in pride, ambition, fear,
'avarice, jealousy, or sensuality; and
'settling the question thus to his own satis-
'faction, resents or ridicules attempts to
'look for other motives. So long as his
'moral judgment is generally correct, he
'inflicts no injury, and he suffers none.
'Cruelty and lust are proper objects of
'abhorrence; he learns to detest them in
'studying the Tiberius of Tacitus, though
'the character described by the great
'Roman historian may have been a mere
'creation of the hatred of the old Roman
'aristocracy. The manifesto of the Prince
'of Orange was a libel against Philip the
'Second; but the Philip of Protestant

'tradition is an embodiment of the perse-
'cuting spirit of Catholic Europe, which it
'would be now useless to disturb.

'The tendency of history is to fall into
'wholesome moral lines, whether they be
'accurate or not, and to interfere with
'harmless illusions may cause greater
'errors than it aspires to cure. Crowned
'offenders are arraigned at the tribunal of
'history for the crimes which they are
'alleged to have committed. It may be
'sometimes shown that the crimes were
'not crimes at all, that the sufferers had
'deserved their fate, that the severities
'were useful and essential for some great
'and valuable purpose. But the reader
'sees in the apology for acts which he had
'regarded as tyrannical a defence of
'tyranny itself. Preoccupied with the re-
'ceived interpretation, he finds deeds ex-
'cused which he had learnt to execrate;
'*and in learning something which, even if true,*
'*is of no real moment to him, he suffers in*
'*the maiming of his perceptions of the differ-*
'*ence between right and wrong.* The white-
'washing of the villains of tradition is,
'therefore, justly regarded as waste of
'labour. If successful, it is of imperfect
'value; if unsuccessful, it is a misuse of

'industry which deserves to be censured. 'Time is too precious to be squandered 'over paradoxes. The dead are gone; the 'censure of mankind has written their 'epitaphs, and so they may be left. Their 'true award will be decided elsewhere' (*The Divorce of Catharine of Arragon*).

The last book of his is his *Erasmus*—lectures delivered at Oxford from the chair to which he was appointed on the death of his bitter critic, Freeman, by Lord Salisbury, one of those very Neo-Catholics Froude so heartily abhorred. Froude felt no obligations to his patron, and with the shades of the prison-house gathering round him, set to work at his old task with all his old vigour. He took as his text the letters of Erasmus, and selecting from them those passages which most interested him as he read them, translated them from the Latin into racy English, passing upon them as he went along his familiar commentary. The result is a most fascinating volume. Erasmus seems alive once more. Whether Froude's Erasmus is the true Erasmus is, of course, matter of controversy. All Mr. Froude would ever have said is, 'It is 'my notion of Erasmus. What is *yours?*' Good history or bad, it is a blow in the

face of Neo-Catholicism, and perhaps that is all Mr. Froude ever meant it to be.

Personal controversy Mr. Froude avoided. He seldom replied to his maddened foes. He made no great pretensions, and held himself aloof from professional authorism. He enjoyed country life and country pursuits, and the society of cultivated women. He has gone from us, leaving the fight in which he took so fierce a part still raging and unsettled. The ranks are closing up, and his old place already knows him no more.

VII

ROBERT BROWNING

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE BROWNING HALL SETTLEMENT, WALWORTH, DECEMBER 12, 1897.

To meet together to do honour to the memory and extol the genius of a great poet is so becoming, so proper, and so seemly a thing to do, that it needs neither apology nor explanation. We have all come here, I hope, attracted by one and the same force—Robert Browning. He—that is to say, his genius—has entered mystically into the lives of many thousands of his countrymen. He lives on in our minds a joint-life with the manifold emotions, the countless joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, doubts and certainties that course one another, like shadows over the hillside, over the very uneven surfaces of our lives. For unless a poet really succeeds in weaving himself into the texture of our

days, in mingling himself with the crowded phantasmagoria of life; unless he stands by our side as we feast our eyes on scenes of splendour or of charm; unless we think of him either when alone we tread the wine-press of sorrow, or when we are merry—

> 'Flower o' the rose,
> If I've been merry what matter who knows?'—

unless a poet, I say, is this, and does this for us, he at all events is not one of *our* great poets. But if he is this, and if he does this, we all owe him reverence, and should not be too shamefaced openly to avow it.

Criticism, of course, has its hour. Everything is exposed to criticism—except, possibly, the solar system. The human frame itself, though made, as we are told, in the image of God, is open to just animadversion; at least, so I was recently assured by an eminent physiologist to whom I was complaining of that worst of all the 'isms'—rheumatism. Said he, 'You 'need not wonder. The human frame is 'open to just animadversion.' We do well, therefore, to be critical. It does not do to be too easily pleased; to take anything and everything to the sanctuary of

our hearts. There is no word in the English language the depreciation of which is more deplorable than the word taste. It has become but a paltry thing—taste in blue china or in Japanese fans—but in reality it is a great gift. To have a bad taste is a shocking calamity. The critical faculty must not be suppressed. But criticism is but a means to an end, and the end is joy. In literature, as in life, the whole is far greater than its parts. To mention only the poets of this century, and British poets, Scott and Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, Arnold, Browning, are more to the living, and have been more to the unnumbered dead, than ever you would guess by reading about them in the reviews or in those nice little summaries and estimates of their work and wages with which the road to Parnassus is so neatly paved in these latter days.

To-night we are not critical, we are frankly grateful, and avowedly reverent. The longer I live the more convinced I become that the only two things that really count in national existence are a succession of writers of genius and the proud memories of great, noble, and

honourable deeds. And the writer of genius is only he whose words 'pass into 'proverbs among his people'; whose thoughts colour men's lives; who comes and goes with them in and out of their homesteads; who accompanies them whithersoever they may wander, whatever they may do, by whatever death they may be destined to die. For the fame of such a writer, you must look far beyond the cliques and coteries of a self-conscious culture; you must look out upon the open road and the flagged walks of cities where men and women are living their lives and playing their parts—'the same old rôle, 'the rôle that is what we make it; as great 'as we like, or as small as we like, or both 'great and small' (*Walt Whitman*).

Robert Browning is far too near us to enable even the most far-seeing to lay out his kingdom by metes and bounds. Besides, who ever dare tether the spirit of poesy? It bloweth where it lists. In old days one was sometimes asked, 'But who 'reads Browning?' It was always easy to reply, 'More people than are dreamed of 'in your philosophy.' But that particular foolish question, at all events, is no longer asked. The obscure author of the un-

doubtedly obscure *Sordello*, who came from nobody knew where, and wrote a poem about nobody knew what; who was vouched for by none of the great schools and universities, of which Englishmen are wont to make much; who courted no critic and sought no man's society; slowly, very slowly, won his audience, made his way, earned his fame without puffs preliminary in the newspapers, or any other of the now well-worn expedients of attracting attention to that lamentable object one's self.

There is something indescribably affecting and majestic in the progress of three of the greatest writers of our time—Carlyle, Tennyson, and Browning—all three men of undoubted genius. Thank God, no one of them bowed the knee to Baal. Faults they probably all had, faults of style, and it may be of temper; poverty they knew, and depression of spirit; for long it actually seemed as if there were no room for these three men in the very country they best adorned. We are too apt to forget in reading the lives or considering the lives of these men—we are somewhat too apt to jump these long periods; our forward-reaching thoughts

rush and crowd to the time when their genius shall be recognised and their labour rewarded. We act upon the advice, usually sound, *Respice finem*. But those periods had to be lived through, week by week, month by month, long year after long year. With what a depth of half-concealed feeling does Carlyle, in his essay on Johnson, tell the story how 'when Dr. 'Johnson one day read his own Satire, in 'which the life of a scholar is painted, with 'the various obstructions thrown in his way 'to fortune and to fame, he burst into a 'passion of tears. Mr. Thrale's family and 'Mr. Scott only were present, who, in a 'jocose way, clapped him on the back, and 'said: "What's all this, my dear sir? '"Why, you and I and *Hercules*, you know, '"were all troubled with *melancholy*." He 'was a very large man, and made out the 'triumvirate with Johnson and Hercules, 'comically enough. These,' adds Carlyle, 'were sweet tears; the sweet victorious 'remembrance lay in them of toils indeed 'frightful, yet never flinched from, and 'now triumphed over. "One day it shall '"delight you also to remember labour '"done."'

No one of the three—Carlyle, Tenny-

son, or Browning—abated a jot or a tittle of their just pretensions. They flung no sops to Cerberus; they never asked the great greedy public what it wanted; no, each of them

> 'Smote the rock and spread the water,
> Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him;'

and after a while the crowd—which, after all, is a docile crowd—ceased to sneer, and a generation arose who learned both to love and to reverence; and these illustrious men, who had the luck to live, saw the world, which had mocked them in their hour of real need, grow almost grotesquely eager to pay its debt with compound interest.

It is a mark of high rank in poetry to attain eminence both in thought and in expression by undefinable paths. You cannot say confidently of Wordsworth, or of Tennyson, or of Browning, how they came to possess their ideas. Most men can be tracked as easily as you track a fox. At this age they read this or that book; they then proceeded to this college at the university, or to that; after leaving the university they went somewhere and met somebody; as they grew older they

modified their opinions in one direction or another, or allied themselves to one party or to another. It is almost as easy as playing Tick-tack-to. Even if they go to the universities original men have a trick of leaving them without taking their degree. Who taught Robert Browning his marvellous lore? You cannot say. No great poet, perhaps, ever expressed orthodox opinion. The clergy poets, as they have been called, are more estimable than great. I suppose this is what Emerson meant when he said, 'Would a man be great, he 'must be a Nonconformist.' But by a Nonconformist, Emerson, I take it, did not exactly mean a Baptist. The poets will not vote by ticket. Their song of faith may be clear, but if so, it is with the clearness of the lark; their piety may be assured, but if so it is the piety of the heavens. You must not approach them with tests, or vex them with *credos* cast in the language of ancient theological controversy. We are told in the biography of Sir Matthew Hale, that eminent judge, that he never once for thirty-six years missed going to church on Sunday. You will search the biographies of great poets in vain for a similar testimony. They are

notorious absentees, and Wordsworth one of the worst. It is a strange thought how, side by side with the stately establishments of religion, with old creeds and splendid liturgies, Church music and processions, systems of theology well defined and well protected—side by side with these you find, unestablished, unendowed, and in a sense unrecognised, but wielding an influence as wide as the heavens—you find the poets. Mankind has ever turned to them to hear what *they* had to say of the mysteries of being, of life, and death and immortality. It is often little enough; it is vague, it is indefinable; by the side of the assurances of the Church it is almost contemptible; yet it possesses an authority of its own, an authority recognised always, everywhere, and by all.

The connection between poetry and religion is a very ancient one. The great poet, after whom this hall, this old chapel, has been renamed was

> 'One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break;
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.'

He did not come to this faith through Wordsworthian channels, by nature worship, or through the dark and mystical passages of the sacraments; but from the very first he seems to have had an overwhelming sense (to use the words of Mr. Nettleship) of the actual existence of a personal God, and the firm-rooted belief 'that a man's business on this earth is to 'learn the actual extent of his own soul's 'power, and, having learned that, to 'develop it; not relatively to the moral or 'social laws prevalent in this life, but 'absolutely for the soul's aggrandisement 'in a life hereafter.' Matthew Arnold in one of his poems speaks, somewhat too contemptuously perhaps, of 'doctors of 'the soul.' Browning was a wise and true doctor of the soul, full as he is of vigour and passion and force, mindful of all the things that make up life, and have made it up here on this earth—

'Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame,
And that glory and that shame alike the gold
Bought and sold.'

Browning knew all this better than most men, but

> 'Whole centuries of folly, noise, and sin,'

could not avail against his strenuous faith in the soul of man.

> 'Oh! we are sunk enough here, God knows;
> But not quite so sunk that moments,
> Pure tho' seldom, are denied us
> When the Spirit's true endowments
> Stand out plainly from its false ones,
> And apprise it if pursuing
> Or the right way or the wrong way,
> To its triumph or undoing.
> There are flashes struck from midnights,
> There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
> Whereby piled-up honours perish,
> Whereby swoll'n ambitions dwindle;
> While first this or that poor impulse,
> Which for once had play unstifled,
> Seems the sole work of a life-time
> That away the rest have trifled.'

In these lines, and many others which will occur, I dare say, to your memories, but with which it would not be wise to detain you, you will recognise the true Browning that we love. He has no room for pessimism in his philosophy. To call him a cheerful poet would be to insult his vast knowledge and deep-seated wisdom. He

had delved too deep into human nature, into the hearts of Guidos and Gauthiers; he was, indeed, too well read in the history of hell ever to be a cheerful poet. But he is a cheering one. He helps you up. He does not lie down affectionately by your side.

'What is the doubt, my brothers? Quick with it!
Quick, for time presses. Tell the whole mind out,
And let us ask and answer and be saved.'

'Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

'For thence—a paradox,
Which comforts while it mocks—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me;
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.'

Is it any wonder we love Browning? With him life is full of great things—of love and beauty and joy. His poems, particularly of that period which ends in *The Ring and the Book*, are all aglow with the

colour of life, its many-hued interests. Hence, while we are reading him, we find it easy to share his strenuous hope, his firm faith, particularly his undying faith in immortality. It is the poverty of our lives that renders it hard to believe in immortality. I am quoting from an American writer, W. R. Alger. 'If,' he says, 'a 'man feels that his life is spent in expe- 'dients for killing time, he finds it hard to 'suppose that he can go on for ever trying 'to kill eternity. It is when he thinks on 'the littlenesses that make up his day, on 'the poor trifles he cares for—his pipe, his 'dinner, his ease, his gains, his newspaper '—that he feels so cramped and cribbed, 'cabined, and confined that he loses the 'power of conceiving anything vast or 'sublime — immortality among the rest. 'When a man rises in his aims and looks 'to the weal of the universe, and the har- 'mony of the soul with God, then we feel 'that extinction would be grievous; that it 'would be waste of a plant brought by God 'towards perfection, towards comprehend- 'ing God's work, and longing to help in it, 'and thereby becoming able to help in it, 'if at this moment it was to perish.' Who so helpful to make us rise in our aims as

Robert Browning? 'Tell the whole mind 'out!' How characteristic a phrase of the poet's is that, and how he has done it over and over again, sometimes in his own name, oftener in dramatic guise and not necessarily speaking out his own mind. Have we not got it in *Caliban upon Setebos*, in *Bishop Blougram*, in *Mr. Sludge, the Medium?* Nowhere else in modern speech could we find utterances so large, so convincing, so full of the marrow and fatness of speculation.

You are happy in this hall to be associated with so victorious a name. Here, in this old York Street Dissenting chapel, on the 14th of June, 1812, he was brought to be baptized, and no more valiant soldier was enlisted in the army of things spiritual, at any of the altars of Christianity, on that 14th of June, than Robert Browning. He has been what we call dead for eight years. The loss is great for those who knew him. In my memory he will always live as the most cordial man I ever knew. Never can I forget how on your entrance he would rise from his chair, advance to meet you with both arms outstretched, and cover you with the rich bounty of his welcome. The worst thing I ever heard said of

Browning was that, like his own *Last Duchess*, he

> ' . . . liked whate'er
> He looked on, and his looks went everywhere.
> Sir, 'twas all one !'

As one of his latest and least distinguished acquaintances, I, at all events, did not quarrel with a courtesy which from the first I recognised to be the natural clothing of a noble and affectionate nature. But the poet Browning is not dead, he still energizes among us, and unless, indeed, his faith woefully deceived him, he lives elsewhere, and his spirit may well be with us to-night. Surely, at all events, we would wish it to be so.

> 'That still despite the distance and the dark
> What was, again may be, some interchange
> Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,
> Some benediction anciently thy smile.'

He, however, has himself taught us how to speak of him after his death :

> 'At the midnight, in the silence of the sleep-time,
> When you set your fancies free,
> Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
> Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
> Pity me?
>
> * * * * *

'No, at noonday, in the bustle of man's work-time,
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry, "Speed, fight on, fare ever
There as here!"'

VIII

IS IT POSSIBLE TO TELL A GOOD BOOK FROM A BAD ONE?

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT EDINBURGH ON NOVEMBER 3, 1899.

DURING the last few months a saying of Voltaire's has been sounding uncomfortably in my ears. It occurs in one of his amusing letters from England. He remarks: 'The 'necessity of saying something, the per- 'plexity of having nothing to say, and a 'desire of being witty are three circum- 'stances which alone are capable of making 'even the greatest writer ridiculous.' A hasty assent to an ill-considered request has placed me where I am to-night. The popularity of Lord Rosebery has filled this hall, and I feel the direful necessity of saying something, whilst, at the same time, a rigorously conducted self-examination has made plain to me what is the perplexity of

having nothing to say. As for the desire of being witty, there was a time, I frankly confess, when I was consumed by it; I am so no longer. This desire of being witty, sneered at as it always is, has in most cases an honourable because a humane origin. It springs from pity for the audience. It is given but to half a dozen men in a century really to teach their grown-up contemporaries, whilst to inflame them by oratory is happily the province of a very few, but to bore them well-nigh to extinction is within the scope of most men's powers. This desire to amuse just a little ought not, therefore, to be so very contemptible, springing as it does from the pity that is akin to love. But now, to me, at all events, it matters not to whom this desire is related or by whom it was begot. I have done with it. Ten years in the House of Commons and on the political platform have cured me of a weakness I now feel to be unmanly; I no longer pity my audiences; I punish them.

Having made this point clear, I pass on.

There is something truly audacious in my talking to Edinburgh people on a question of Taste; indeed, it is not only an audacious, but an *eerie* thing to do. I

remember, Lord Rosebery, how you were affected, so you have told us, the first time you addressed the society of which you are now president, by the air of old-world wisdom that hung about Lord Colonsay. But, at all events, that venerable lawyer was then in the flesh. To-night I seem surrounded by ghosts in wigs, the ghosts of Edinburgh men all famous in their day, some famous for all days, who, at the very sound of the word *Taste* uttered after all this lapse of years in this hall, have hurried hither this wet and stormy night, full of doubts and suspicions, to hear how a theme once their very own may come to be handled by a stranger at the end of a century not their own.

'What else should tempt them back to taste our air
Except to see how their successors fare?'

I shall say nothing to offend these courtly shades. I am far too much in doubt about the Present, far too perturbed about the Future, to be otherwise than profoundly reverential towards the Past. Besides, as they cannot speak, it would be ill-bred even to poke a little fun at them. I wish it were otherwise. I wish—how I wish!—that Lord Rosebery could now call upon

Dr. Blair to address you—the great Dr. Blair, whose *Lectures on Taste* may still be had of the Edinburgh secondhand booksellers for a sum it would be ungenerous to state in figures. After all, the best books are the cheapest. Mr. Home, the author of *Douglas*, would, I dare say, conquer the shyness that pursued him through life and say a few words in response to a call; 'Jupiter' Carlyle would probably prefer to reserve till supper-time (the meal when mostly truth is spoken) his trenchant criticisms. It would be honouring the occasion too much to suppose that the great Adam Smith would care to attend, or a greater than Adam Smith, David Hume, a man who, though the twentieth century may slip his collar, has more than any other single thinker dominated the nineteenth, from its tremendous beginnings to its sombre close. David Hume is, of all others, the Edinburgh man I should most like to hear on the *Standard of Taste*. One hundred and fifty-seven years have gone by since he published an essay on this very subject, to which I shall refer in a minute.

I have raised the subject of taste and a standard of taste by asking the question,

'Is it possible to tell a good book from a 'bad one?' This almost involves an affirmative reply. A well-known Nonconformist divine wrote a short treatise which he entitled, *Is it Possible to make the Best of Both Worlds?* But this world, at all events, always persisted (much to the author's annoyance) in calling the book *How to make the Best of Both Worlds*, whilst in the trade the volume was always referred to (curtly enough) as *Binney's Best.*

The world is a vulgar place, but it has the knack, the vulgar knack, of hitting nails on the head. Unless, in the opinion of the author, it *was* possible to make the best of both worlds, there was small probability of a prosperous Protestant divine asking the question at all; and in the same way, unless I am prepared to answer my own query with a blunt negative and to sit down, it becomes necessary to drop a hint or two as to how a good book may be known from a bad one.

Firstly, it is a very difficult thing to do, but difficulty is no excuse. Are there not treatises extant which instruct their readers how to tell a good horse from a bad one, and even, so overreaching is the ambition of

man, how to boil a potato?—both feats of great skill and infrequent achievement.

Secondly, not only is the task difficult, but the necessity for mastering it is urgent. The matter really presses.

It is, I know, usual when a man like myself, far gone in middle life, finds himself addressing a company containing many young people, to profess great sorrow for his own plight and to heap congratulations on the youthful portion of his audience. I am in no mood to-night for any such polite foolery. When I think of the ever-increasing activity of the press, home, foreign and colonial—the rush of money into the magazine market, the growth of what is called education, the extension of the copyright laws, and the spread of what Goethe somewhere calls 'the noxious mist, the 'dropping poison of half culture'—so far from congratulating those of you who are likely to be alive fifty years hence, I feel far more disposed to offer these unlucky youths and maidens my sincerest condolences, and to reserve all my congratulations for myself.

The output of books is astounding. Their numbers destroy their reputation. A great crowd of books is as destructive of

the literary instinct, which is a highly delicate thing, as is a London evening party of the social instinct. Novel succeeds novel, speculative treatise speculative treatise, in breathless haste, each treading upon the heels of its predecessor, and followed by a noisy crowd of critics bellowing and shouting praise or blame. Newspaper paragraphs about the books that are to be rub the bloom off these peaches long before they lie upon our tables. The other day I read this announcement: 'The Memoir of 'Dr. Berry, of Wolverhampton, will bear 'the *simple* title, *Life of the Rev. C. A. Berry*, '*D.D.*' Heavens! what other title could it bear? These paragraphs are usually inspired by the publisher, for nowhere is competition more fierce than among publishers, who puff their own productions and extol the often secret charms of their kept authors with an impetuosity almost indelicate. In the wake of the publisher and the critic there sidles by a subtler shape, the literary interviewer, one of the choicest products of the age, who, playing with deft fingers on that most responsive of all instruments, human vanity, supplies the newspapers with columns of confessions taken down from the lips of authors them-

selves, who seem to be glad to tell us how they came to be the great creatures advertisement has made them, how their first books got themselves written, and which of their creations they themselves love the best. Let us never be tempted to underrate the labours of the interviewer. There is apt to be far more of that delicious compound human nature in the writings of the interviewer than in the works of the interviewed. If those authors only knew it, by far their most interesting character is their own.

But not only is the output enormous, and what may be called the undergrowth rank, but the treatment is too frequently crude. Penmen, as bookwriters are now pleasingly called, in their great haste to carry their goods early to market, are too apt to gobble up what they take to be the results of scientific investigation; and stripping them bare of the conditions and qualifications properly belonging to scientific methods, to present them to the world as staple truths, fit matter for æsthetic treatment. There is something half comic, half tragic in the almost headlong apprehension of half-born truths by half-educated minds. Whilst the serious investigator is carefully 'sounding

'his dim and perilous way,' making good his ground as he goes,

'Till captive Science yields her last retreat,'

these half-inspired dabblers, these ready-reckoners, are already hawking the discovery about the streets, making it the *motif* of their jejune stage-plays and the text of their blatant discourses.

To stay this Niagara, to limit this output, is, of course, impossible. Nothing can stop it. Agricultural depression did not hit it. Declining trade never affected it. It is confidently anticipated that the millionaires of the future will be the writers of really successful shilling shockers and farces that take the town. *Charley's Aunt* has made more money than would be represented by the entire fortunes of Sir Walter Scott, Thackeray, and Dickens all added together.

Our concern to-night is with none of these fine folks. I, for one, am always ready to prostrate myself at the feet of Genius. Nothing will ever induce me to quarrel with genius. Without it there would be no rapture in reading, and small joy in life. Talent must be a very delightful thing both to possess and to exercise.

Learning is for ever honourable; industry is always respectable. To be a successful impostor, a really fraudulent author, to live in luxury by the bad taste of your contemporaries, to splash with the mud from the wheels of your fast-driven curricle the blind Miltons and angry Carlyles of your own day as they painfully pedestrianize the pavement, must have an element of fun about it—but it is not for us. I am assuming that we do not belong to the many who write, or to the many who criticise in print what is written, but to the few who read. How are *we* to tell a good book from a bad one? Not for the purpose of making money out of the process, but for the solace of our own souls, for the education of our own powers, for the increase of our own joys. It is done by the exercise of a discriminative faculty called Taste. If you ask that amusing figment the man in the street what Taste is, the only answers you are likely to get are that 'Tastes 'differ,' or 'What is one man's meat is 'another man's poison,' or 'All is grist 'that comes to my mill,' or '*De gustibus* '*non est disputandum*'; most discouraging replies every one of them. Nor would it be wise to attempt to minimize these dif-

ferences of Taste; they are most real. Hume, in the Essay I promised to quote from, says only too truthfully:

'Every voice is united in applauding 'elegance, propriety, simplicity, spirit, in 'writing; and in blaming fustian, affecta- 'tion, coldness, and a false brilliancy. But 'when critics come to particulars this seem- 'ing unanimity vanishes, and it is found 'they had affixed a very different meaning 'to their expressions. In all matters of 'opinion in science the case is opposite. 'The difference among men is there oftener 'found to lie in generals than in particulars, 'and to be less in reality than in appear- 'ance. An explanation of the terms com- 'monly ends the controversy, and the dis- 'putants are surprised to find that they 'had been quarrelling while, at bottom, 'they agreed in their judgment.'

The truth of this is obvious. We all hate fustian and affectation; but were I to have such bad taste as to inquire whether that popular novelist Mr. A. B. ever writes anything but fustian, or whether the exquisite style of Mr. C. D. has not a strong savour of affectation about it, I should excite angry passions.

But as it is Hume's contention that there

is a standard of Taste, he necessarily proceeds to say, 'that though this axiom '(namely, that tastes differ), by passing 'into a proverb, seems to have attained the 'sanction of common-sense, there is cer-'tainly a species of common-sense which 'opposes it.' Having said this, Hume determined to give his readers an illustration of this standard, and in order to do so, he adopted the common and useful device of selecting extreme instances. He took two authors so good that all, he thought, must acknowledge their goodness, and two authors so bad that all, he thought, must acknowledge their badness. 'Whoever,' he writes, 'would assert an equality of 'genius and elegance between Ogilby and 'Milton, or Bunyan and Addison, would 'be thought to defend no less an extrava-'gance than if he had maintained a mole-'hill to be as high as Teneriffe or a pond 'as extensive as the ocean. Though there 'may be found persons who give the pre-'ference to the former authors, no one pays 'attention to such a taste, and we pro-'nounce without scruple the sentiment of 'these pretended critics to be absurd and 'ridiculous.'

Hume's first illustration will pass muster.

In the case of Ogilby *v.* Milton, the pursuer has long since been dismissed with expenses; but otherwise with Bunyan *v.* Addison, for dearly as we may love Sir Roger de Coverley, and fond though we may be of taking a turn among the tombs in Westminster Abbey with Mr. Spectator, Bunyan's Christian and Faithful, his Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, Giant Despair, Vanity Fair, and Interpreter's House have established for themselves a homestead in the minds and memories of the English-speaking race, from which they can only be evicted along with Moses in the Bulrushes, Daniel in the Lions' Den, the Canterbury Pilgrims, Rosalind in the Forest of Arden, and Jeannie Deans in the Robber's Cave, near Gunnersley Hill, in Lincolnshire.

So difficult is it to be a critic! The good-natured ghost of St. David will pardon a reference only made for the purpose of remarking how, if he made a bad shot in 1742, it is more than probable—nay, it is certain—that the critics of 1899 do not always hit the target.

The fact is, and we may as well recognise it frankly, all critical judgments are and must ever remain liable to two sources of variation, to both of which Hume refers.

The one is the different humours of particular men, the other is the particular manners and opinions of our age and country. There is no escaping from these, and this being so, it is idle to expect the abolition of differences of opinion in matters of taste. How Hume came to go wrong —for I assume he did go wrong—about John Bunyan we can see from his use of the word *elegance* in conjunction with *genius;* 'an equality of genius and ele-'gance,' he wrote. Elegance was one of the catch-words of the eighteenth century. It was, at all events, a sensible catch-word, though, like all catch-words, sure occasionally to mislead.

The upshot of all this is depressing and discouraging to the very last degree. In the realm of morals we may believe with the great Bishop Butler that there is in every man a superior principle of reflection or conscience which passes judgment upon himself, which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself and approves or condemns accordingly. In the region of the exact sciences, among a thousand different opinions which different men may entertain of the same subject, there is one, and but

one, that is just and true. But who will dare so to lay down the law about the life of a book, or the future of a picture, or the reputation of a building; and yet who can doubt that in the realm of beauty there is a reign of law, a superior principle of reflection, passing judgment and magisterially asserting itself on every fit occasion?

Butler's theory of the conscience has been called 'the pope in your bosom 'theory.' What happiness to have an æsthetic pope, a prisoner in the Vatican of your own breast!

Speaking for myself, I could wish for nothing better, apart from moral worth, than to be the owner of a taste at once manly, refined and unaffected, which should enable me to appreciate real excellence in literature and art, and to depreciate bad intentions and feeble execution wherever I saw them. To be for ever alive to merit in poem or in picture, in statue or in bust; to be able to distinguish between the grand, the grandiose, and the merely bumptious; to perceive the boundary between the simplicity which is divine and that which is ridiculous, between gorgeous rhetoric and vulgar ornamentation, between pure and

manly English meant to be spoken or read, and sugared phrases, which seem intended, like lollipops, for suction; to feel yourself going out in joyful admiration for whatever is noble and permanent, and freezing inwardly against whatever is pretentious, wire-drawn and temporary—this, indeed, is to taste of the fruit of the tree, once forbidden, of the knowledge of good and evil.

But this is simply to extol what has not yet been proved to be attainable. What is 'good taste'? My kingdom for a definition. I think the best is Burke's, given by him in that treatise on the *Sublime and Beautiful*, which he wrote before he handed over to Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Richmond and Lord John Cavendish what was meant for mankind. 'I mean 'by the word taste no more than that 'faculty or those faculties of the mind which 'are affected with or form a judgment of 'the works of imagination and the elegant 'arts. The cause of a wrong taste is a 'defect of judgment, and this may arise 'from a natural weakness of the under-'standing, or, which is much more com-'monly the case, it may arise from a want 'of proper and well-directed exercise which 'alone can make it strong and ready. . . .

'It is known that the taste is improved, 'exactly as we improve our judgment by 'extending our knowledge, by a steady 'attention to our object, and by frequent 'exercise; they who have not taken these 'methods, if their taste decides quickly, it 'is always uncertainly, and their quickness 'is owing to their presumption and rash-'ness, and not to any hidden irradiation 'that in a moment dispels all darkness 'from their minds.'

'The cause of a wrong taste,' says Burke, 'is a defect of judgment;' and here I must add on my own account that nobody comes into this world with a ripe judgment. You are as likely to be born with a silk hat on your head as with good taste implanted in your breast. To go wrong is natural, to go right is discipline. Generation after generation of boys go to schools and universities to be taught to play cricket, to row, and nowadays how to play golf. Each generation reproduces with startling fidelity to the type the same old familiar, deep-rooted faults. No generation escapes them, but each in its turn has painfully to be taught to leave undone the things that naturally they would do, and do those things which, if left to themselves, they would most cer-

tainly leave undone. With oaths and revilings are they adjured to abandon nature and to practise art, to dig up the faults they were born with, and to adopt in their place methods which time has approved and discipline established. Success is very partial, but sometimes it does happen that a patient teacher finds an apt scholar, and then, when, after weary months, it may be years of practice, something like perfection is attained, and we see before us a finished oarsman, a faultless bat, a brilliant golfer, we exclaim with admiration as we watch the movements so graceful, so easy, so effective, of this careful product of artifice, 'How naturally he does it!'

Gentlemen, if you want to find the natural man at work, you must look for him in the bunkers of life. There you will find crowds of them trying to get out and upbraiding the ill-luck that (as they think) got them in. Their actions are animated, their language is strong, but neither actions nor language are in good taste.

If, then, we would possess good taste we must take pains about it. We must study models, we must follow examples, we must compare methods, and (above anything else) we must crucify the natural man. If

there is one thing to be dreaded in these matters, it is what is called the unaided intelligence of the masses. A crudely-coloured oleograph of the Albert Memorial may give pleasure to an unaided intelligence, but is that pleasure to be compared in depth of satisfaction with that which is afforded when the educated eye feasts upon the nature-interpreting canvas of a great artist?

All, I think, are agreed about the study of the models; of the things which are attested, the things which, as St. Augustine says, '*sana mens omnium hominum attesta-*'*tur*.' The elegant Addison agrees. 'Lit-'erary taste,' says he, 'is the faculty which 'discerns the beauties of an author with 'pleasure and the imperfections with dis-'like. If a man would know whether he 'is possessed of this faculty I would have 'him read over the celebrated works of 'antiquity, which have stood the test of 'so many different ages and countries.' Hume says the same thing. So does Goethe, who said to Eckermann, 'Taste 'is only to be educated by contemplation 'not of the tolerably good, but of the truly 'excellent. I therefore show you only the 'best works, and when you are *grounded*

'in these you will have a standard for the 'rest, which you will know how to value 'without overrating them. And I show 'you the best in each class, that you may 'perceive that no class is to be despised, 'but that each gives delight when a man 'of genius attains the highest point.' Mr. Matthew Arnold strongly held the same view, and recommended us all to carry in our heads scraps of Homer and Virgil, of Dante and Shakespeare, of Milton and Keats, and whenever we are required, as we so often are, to admire the worthless and extol the commonplace, to murmur these passages under our breath as a kind of taste-tonic. Somewhat in the same way the excellent John Howard used in his prison visitations to secrete small weighing scales about his person, and after asking to see a prisoner's ration of food would whip out his machine and convict the gaoler before his face of trying to palm off one pound for two. Mr. Arnold's pocket scales for testing poets have been ridiculed, but I recommend their use unhesitatingly.

We may then, I think, assume that the best way of telling a good book from a bad one is to make yourself as well acquainted

as you can with some of the great literary models. Do not be frightened of them. They afford the widest choice; they are for all moods. There is no need to like them all alike. The language difficulty presses heavily upon some, but, as we are seeking only our own good and not aspiring to instruct the world, we need not postpone our own critical education until we can read Sophocles for fun. No doubt it would be well if we all could, but just as it is better to spend three days in Rome or three hours in Athens than never to see those cities, so it is better to read the *Antigone* in the translation of Mr. Jebb than not to read it at all. It is all very well for scholars to turn up their noses at translations, but plain Britons, whose greatest book is a translation by divers hands, and whose daily prayers have been done into English for them from the Latin, may be well content, if they do not happen to be masters of the languages of antiquity, or of all the tongues of the modern world, to gain through the medium of the best translations some insight into the ways of thought and modes of expression of the sovereigns of literature, the lords of human smiles and tears. But, indeed, with the

Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics in your pocket, and such volumes as *Chambers's Encyclopædia of Literature* on your shelf, the man who has only his own English at command has ample room and verge enough within which to cultivate a taste which ought to be sufficiently sound to prevent him from wallowing among the potsherds, or, decked out with vulgar fairings, from following some charlatan in his twenty-eighth edition.

We begin, then, with tradition—with tradition, which plays so great a part in religion, in law, in life. Genius may occasionally flout it, but I am assuming we have no genius. We shall do well to pay tradition reverence. It would be a nice inquiry whether it is better for a man's morale to be a rebel or a slave; but I am not concerned with it to-night. Veneration for the models does not involve servility.

It is a tremendous saying of Landor's, 'We admire by tradition and we criticise 'by caprice.'

To admire by tradition is a poor thing. Far better really to admire Miss Gabble-goose's novels than pretend to admire Miss Austen's. Nothing is more alien to the

spirit of pure enjoyment than simulated rapture, borrowed emotion. If after giving a classic a fair chance you really cannot abide him, or remain hermetically sealed against his charm, it is perhaps wisest to say nothing about it, though if you do pluck up heart of grace and hit him a critical rap over his classical costard it will not hurt him, and it may do you good. But let the rap succeed and not precede a careful study, for depend upon it it is no easy matter to become a classic. A thousand snares beset the path to immortality, as we are pleased to call a few centuries of fame. Rocks, snows, avalanches, bogs—you may climb too high for your head, you may sink too low for your soul; you may be too clever by half or too dull for endurance, you may be too fashionable or too outrageous; there are a hundred ways to the pit of oblivion. Therefore, when a writer has by general consent escaped his age, when he has survived his environment, it is madness and folly for us, the children of a brief hour, to despise the great literary tradition which has put him where he is. But, I repeat, to respect tradition is not to admire traditionally.

Tradition is the most trustworthy adver-

tisement and the wisest advice. Ah, advertisement! there, indeed, is a word to make one blush. Ruskin has somewhere told us that we are not to buy our books by advertisement, but by advice. It is very difficult nowadays to distinguish between the two. Into how many homes has the *Times* succeeded in thrusting the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and the *Century Dictionary?* The *Daily News* has its own edition of Dickens, whilst the *Standard* daily trumpets the astounding merits of an Anglo-American compound which compresses into twenty volumes the best of everything. These newspapers advise us in their advertisement columns to buy books in the sale of which their proprietors are personally interested. Is their advice advertisement, or is their advertisement advice?

The advice given you by literary tradition is, at all events, absolutely independent. I therefore say, be shy of quarrelling with tradition, but by all means seek to satisfy yourselves that the particular tradition is sound. We criticise by caprice; this is the other half of Landor's saying. The history of criticism is a melancholy one. What are we to say to the blank indifference of our

fathers to *Sartor Resartus*, to *Bells and Pomegranates*, to the early poems of Tennyson and Matthew Arnold and William Morris, to *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel?* Are we likely to be wiser than our fathers? All we can do is to keep hard at it crucifying the natural man. This is best done, as Burke said, by *extending our knowledge, by a steady attention to our object, and by frequent exercise.*

In extending our knowledge we must keep our eye on the models, be they books or pictures, marbles or bricks. We must, as far as possible, widen our horizons, and be always exercising our wits by constant comparisons. Above all must we ever be on our guard against prejudice, nor should we allow paradox to go about unchained.

I go back to Hume. 'Strong sense 'united to delicate sentiment, improved by 'practice, perfected by comparison, and 'cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle 'critics to be judges of the fine arts'; and again he says, 'It is rare to meet with a 'man who has a just taste without a sound 'understanding.'

Go get thee understanding, become possessed of strong sense, if thou wouldst know how to tell a good book from a bad

one. You may have—though it is not likely—Homer by heart, Virgil at your fingers' ends, all the great models of dignity, propriety and splendour may be on your shelves, and yet if you are without understanding, without the happy mixture of strong sense and delicacy of sentiment, you will fail to discern amid the crowd and crush of authors the difference between the good and the bad; you will belong to the class who preferred Cleveland to Milton, Montgomery to Keats, Moore to Wordsworth, Tupper to Tennyson.

Understanding may be got. By taking thought we can add to our intellectual stature. Delicacy may be acquired. Good taste is worth striving after, it adds to the joy of the world.

'For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning task-work give,
Dreaming of nought beyond their prison wall;
And as year after year
Fresh products of their barren labour fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast,
And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are
prest,

Death in their prison reaches them,
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.'

From this brazen prison, from this barren toil, from this deadly gloom, who would not make his escape if he could? A cultivated taste, an educated eye, a pure enthusiasm for literature, are keys which may let us out if we like. But even here one must be on one's guard against mere *connoisseurship*. 'Taste,' said Carlyle—and I am glad to quote that great name before I have done—'if it means anything but 'a paltry connoisseurship, must mean a 'general susceptibility to truth and noble-'ness, a sense to discern and a heart to love 'and reverence all beauty, order and good-'ness, wheresoever or in whatsoever forms 'and accomplishments they are to be 'seen.'

Wordsworth's shepherd, Michael, who

'had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists
That came to him and left him on the heights,'

had doubtless a greater susceptibility to truth and nobleness than many an *Edinburgh* or *Quarterly* reviewer; but his love, as Wordsworth tells us, was a blind love, and his books, other than his Bible, were

the green valleys and the streams and brooks.

There is no harm in talking about books, still less in reading them, but it is folly to pretend to worship them.

> 'Deign on the passing world to turn your eyes,
> And pause awhile from letters to be wise.'

To tell a good book from a bad one is, then, a troublesome job, demanding, *first*, a strong understanding; *second*, knowledge, the result of study and comparison; *third*, a delicate sentiment. If you have some measure of these gifts, which, though in part the gift of the gods, may also be acquired, and can always be improved, and can avoid *prejudice* — political prejudice, social prejudice, religious prejudice, irreligious prejudice, the prejudices of the place where you could not help being born, the prejudices of the university whither chance sent you, all the prejudices that came to you by way of inheritance, and all the prejudices you have picked up on your own account as you went along—if you can give all these the slip and manage to live just a little above the clouds and mists of your own generation, why then, with luck, you may be right nine times out of ten in

your judgment of a dead author, and ought not to be wrong more frequently than perhaps three times out of seven in the case of a living author; for it is, I repeat, a very difficult thing to tell a good book from a bad one.

IX

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE COWDENBEATH (FIFESHIRE) LITERARY SOCIETY ON OCT. 15, 1896.

THERE is a story told of an ancient dandy in London who, taking, one sunny afternoon, his accustomed stroll down Bond Street, met an acquaintance hurrying in the direction of Westminster. 'Whither 'away so fast this hot day?' murmured the dandy. 'To the House of Commons,' cried his strenuous friend, brushing past him. 'What!' said the dandy, with a yawn, 'does that go on still?' Yes; the House of Commons still goes on, still attracts an enormous, some think an inordinate, amount of public attention. What are called 'politics' occupy in Great Britain a curiously prominent place. Literature, art, science, are avenues to a fame more enduring, more agreeable, more

personally attractive than that which awaits at the end of his career the once prominent party politician. Yet with us a party leader looms more largely in the public mind, excites more curiosity, than almost any other description of mortal. He often appears where he would not seem to have any particular business. If a bust is to be unveiled of a man of letters, if a public eulogium is to be pronounced on a man of science, if the health is to be proposed of a painter or an actor, or if some distinguished foreigner is to be feasted, the astute managers of the function, anxious to draw a crowd, and to make the thing a success, try, in the first instance, at all events, to secure the presence of Mr. Balfour, or Lord Rosebery, or Lord Salisbury, or Mr. Chamberlain, rather than of Lord Kelvin or Mr. Leslie Stephen. The fact is that politicians, and particularly the heroes of the House of Commons, the gladiators of politics, share in the country some of the popularity which naturally belongs to famous jockeys, which once belonged to the heroes of the prize ring. It is more difficult to explain this than to understand it. Our party strife, our Parliamentary contests, have long presented many of the

features of a sport. When Mr. Gladstone declared in the House of Commons, with an irresistible twinkle of the eye, that he was an 'old Parliamentary hand,' the House was convulsed with laughter, and the next morning the whole country chuckled with delight. We all liked to think that our leading statesman was not only full of enthusiasm and zeal, but also a wily old fellow, who knew a thing or two better than his neighbours. I have always thought the instantaneous popularity of this remark of Mr. Gladstone's illustrates very well the curiously mixed feelings we entertain towards those great Parliamentary chieftains who have made their reputations on the floor of the House of Commons. There is nothing noble or exalted in the history of the House of Commons. Indeed, a devil's advocate, had he the requisite talent, could easily deliver an oration as long and as eloquent as any of Burke's or Sheridan's, taking as his subject the stupidity, cowardice, and, until quite recent times, the corruption of the House of Commons. I confess I cannot call to mind a single occasion in its long and remarkable history when the House of Commons, as a whole, played a part either

obviously heroic or conspicuously wise; but we all of us can recall hundreds of occasions when, heroism and wisdom being greatly needed, the House of Commons exhibited either selfish indifference, crass ignorance, or the vulgarest passion. Nor can it honestly be said that our Parliamentary heroes have been the noblest of our race. Among great Ministers, Sir Robert Walpole had good sense; Lord North, a kind heart; the elder Pitt, a high spirit; his son, a lofty nature; Peel, a sense of duty; Lord John Russell, a dauntless courage; Disraeli, patience to wait; but for no one of these distinguished men is it possible to have any very warm personal regard. If you turn to men who have never been powerful Ministers, the language of eulogy is perhaps a little easier. Edmund Burke, alone of Parliamentary orators, lives on in his speeches, full as they are of wisdom and humanity; through the too fierce argumentations of Charles James Fox, that great man with a marred career, there always glowed a furious something which warms my heart to its innermost depth. John Bright is a great Parliamentary figure, though many of his speeches lack a 'gracious somewhat.'

Richard Cobden's oratory possessed one unique quality: it almost persuaded his political opponents that he was right and they were wrong. Among the many brilliant lawyers who have, like birds of passage, flitted through the House of Commons usually on their way to what they thought to be better things, I know but one of whom I could honestly say, 'May my soul be with his!' I refer to Sir Samuel Romilly, the very perfection in my eyes of a lawyer, a gentleman, and a member of Parliament, whose pure figure stands out in the frieze of our Parliamentary history like the figure of Apollo amongst a herd of satyrs and goats. And he, in a fit of depression, made an end of himself.

No, the charm—the undeniable charm; the strength—the unquestioned strength; the utility — of the House of Commons do not depend upon the nobility of the characters of either its leaders or its rank and file; nor on its insight into affairs —its capacity to read the signs of the times, its moral force, still less its spiritual depth; but because it has always somehow or other, both before Reform Bills and after Reform Bills, represented truthfully

and forcefully, not the best sense of the wisest people, not the loftiest aspirations of the noblest people, but the primary instincts, the rooted habits of a mixed race of men and women destined in the strange providence of God to play a great part in the history of the world. A zealous philanthropy may well turn pale at the history of the House of Commons which, all through the eighteenth century, tolerated with fearful composure the infamies of the slave trade, the horrors of our gaols, the barbarity of our criminal code, the savagery of the press-gang, the heathenism of the multitude, the condition of things in our mines. The eager reformer must blush as he reads of our Parliamentary representation—of rotten boroughs, of deserted villages with two members, and of Manchester with none. The financial purist must shudder as he studies the Civil List, and ponders over the pensions and sinecures which spread corruption broadcast through the land. It is true enough, and yet the fact remains, that all this time the British nation was stumbling and groaning along the path which has floated the Union Jack in every quarter of the globe. I do not know that it can be said the House of Commons

did much to assist the action of this drama; but, at all events, it did not succeed in frustrating it.

However, my object to-night is to say something about the House of Commons as it exists at present, and as it strikes the humble individual who has sat in it for seven years as your representative. Well, first of all I am a Scottish member, and as a Scottish member one's attitude to the House of Commons is not a little that of an outsider. Scotland has nothing to do with the early history of the English Parliament. Until 1707 you had a Parliament of your own, with Lords and Commons sitting all together cheek by jowl. A great economy of time, for, as Andrew Fairservice in *Rob Roy* puts it, there was no need then for Lords and Commons to have their havers twice over. There is no need to be ashamed of the old Scots Parliament. It passed laws of unrivalled brevity and perfect intelligibility, a now lost art. Scotland owes more to its old Parliament than it yet does to the United Parliament. If you seek a record of its labours you will find one in an essay penned sixty years ago by a Scotch Tory, the very man who wrote a history of Europe in twenty

volumes, to prove that Heaven was always on the side of the Tories.*

The old Scots Parliament met for the last time on March 25, 1707. Unions are never popular. The Union of England and Scotland was undoubtedly most unpopular. One member for Fifeshire voted for it, and two against it. I wonder which way I should have voted. Cupar, Burntisland, Kinghorn, Dunfermline, Inverkeithing, and Queensferry voted Aye; but St. Andrews, Dysart, Kirkcaldy, Pittenweem, voted No. The first article of the Treaty for Union, which involved the rest, was carried by 116 votes against 83; and then, as Lord Seafield said, 'There was 'the end of an auld sang'; but some day—who knows?—the auld sang may be set to a new tune. But this much is certain—the new tune will in no way affect the loyalty of Scotsmen to the Union of the two countries. But for that Union Scotland would not stand where she does in the eyes of the world. What Scotland wanted, what Scotland standing alone could never have had, was a theatre wide enough for the energy of her sons. A country so small, so barren, could never

* Alison's *Essays*, vol. i.

have supplied such a theatre. Scotsmen must have taken service abroad, and spent their lives fighting other men's battles, or building up other men's fortunes. United with South Britain she has been able to play a glorious part both at home and abroad, and this she has done without losing either her Scottish character or her Scottish accent. Still, the fact remains that the seventy-two members from Scotland preserve a character of their own among the 590 representatives from England, Wales, and Ireland. This must be so. Scotch law is very different from English law. We have in Scotland our own laws and our own judicature. A Scotsman cannot be sued in an English court unless he is snapped with a writ whilst sojourning in that strange land. Scotland has her own religion; for, though I am far from saying that traces of a common Christianity may not be found lurking both in Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, still, speaking as a Parliament man, the religions of the two countries may be considered as distinct. In England, those who do not believe in the Divine authority of Episcopacy, who deny either the validity of the orders of the Episcopalian clergy or that there are

such things as holy orders at all, who repudiate the Sacramentarian system, and hate the pretensions of a priesthood, are engaged in a daily, bitter strife with the Church party, with which Scotland has as yet no concern. The educational system is different. Here you have universal School Boards, and pay an allegiance—sometimes real, sometimes formal—to a Catechism which, though often supposed to be the most Scotch thing in existence, was, as a matter of fact, compiled in England by Englishmen. In England School Boards are far from universal, and clerically conducted schools provide the education of half the school-going population. The Scottish system of local government is different in important respects from the English. For example, your Parish Councils administer the Poor Law; in England they do not. Your rating system is different. Here the rate is divided between the owner and the occupier; in England the occupier pays the whole rate. All these differences invite different treatment—there have to be English Bills and Scotch Bills; and though some Scotch members may honestly try to understand English Bills, I never

knew an English member, unless he was by birth a Scotsman, who ever took, or pretended to take, the least trouble to understand a Scotch Bill. They vote if they happen to be in the House whilst Scotch business is being discussed, but they vote as they are told by their party managers. It follows, as I say, from this that a Scotch member surveys the House of Commons somewhat as an outsider.

The great characteristic of the House of Commons is that it is a deliberative and consultative chamber, meeting together for the purposes of framing laws (if it considers any new laws necessary) which are to bind the whole nation, and of criticising the Executive. It does not meet for the purpose of oratory, or to strengthen party organization, but to frame laws of universal obligation and to find fault with or support Ministers. This at once gets rid of the platform orator, and establishes the difference between public meetings and the House of Commons. It is no discredit to the public meeting or to the House of Commons to say that what will find favour with the one excites the disgust of the other, for the two have little in common. The object of a speaker at a public meeting is to excite en-

thusiasm and to spread his faith; but in the House of Commons his object is to remove objections, to state propositions in a way least likely to make reply easy, to show that a scheme is practicable and free from particular injustices, to handle figures with dexterity, and to avoid empty phraseology. There is nothing the House of Commons hates more than to be reminded of the purgatorial flames through which each member has had to pass in order to take his seat by the side of the Speaker; and therefore it is that the utterance in all innocence, by some new member of either party, of the cries and watchwords with which he was accustomed to enliven his electioneering speeches never fails to excite the angry groans of his opponents and the sarcastic smiles of his friends. Nor is there anything dishonest in this. There is a time for all things, and the House of Commons is before everything a deliberative and consultative assembly. Another marked characteristic of the House of Commons is its total indifference to outside reputations or great fortunes. Local magnates, manufacturers whose chimneys blacken a whole countryside, merchants whose ships plough the broad

and narrow seas, speculators in cotton and in sugar, mayors and provosts whose portraits adorn town halls, whose names are household words in their own districts, lawyers so eminent that they will not open their mouths in the courts for less than a hundred guineas, need not hope to be received by the House of Commons otherwise than with languid indifference. If they prove to be bores, so much the worse; if they prove not to be bores, so much the better. If they push themselves to the front, it will be by Parliamentary methods; if they remain insignificant, it is only what was to be expected. Never was an assembly so free from all taint of mercenariness as the House of Commons. It does not care a snap of its finger whether the income of a new member is £100,000 a year or £3 a week—whether his father was a duke or a blacksmith; its only concern with him is that, if he has anything to say, he may say it, and that if he has nothing to say, he will say nothing.

The House of Commons is often said to be a place of great good-fellowship. Within certain necessarily restricted limits it is. It is difficult to maintain aloofness. You may find yourself serving on a Com-

mittee alongside some one whose public utterances or party intrigues you have always regarded with aversion; but it may easily be that you agree with him, not, it may be, as to the Government of Ireland or the sacred principles of Free Trade, but as to the prudence or folly of a particular line of railway, or the necessity of a new water-supply for some large town. You hob-a-nob at luncheon, you grumble together over your dinner, you lament the spread of football clubs and brass bands in your respective constituencies; you criticise your leaders, and are soon quite at home in the society of the very man you thought you detested. There is nothing like a common topic to break the ice, and two members of Parliament have always something to talk about. But farther than this it is hard to go. The House is too large. Amongst an assembly of 670 men well on in life the hand of Death is always busy. Vacancies occur with startling regularity. The only uncertainty is, who is to drop out of the ranks. 'Death of a 'Member of Parliament' is a common announcement on the placards of the evening papers; and then the thriftiest of Scotch members fumbles for his bawbee,

buys the paper, stops under the next lamp-post to see who it is who has gone, whose figure will no more be seen in the Tea-room and the Lobby. Whoever it is, big man or little, a silent member or a talkative one, a wise man or a fool, his place will soon be filled up, and his party Whip will be heard moving for a new writ to issue for the Borough of Small-Talk in the place of Jeremiah Jones, deceased. 'Poor 'Jones!' we all say; 'not a bad fellow, 'Jones; I suppose Brown will get the seat 'this time.'

I know no place where the great truth that no man is necessary is brought home to the mind so remorselessly, and yet so refreshingly, as the House of Commons. Over even the greatest reputations it closes with barely a bubble. And yet the vanity of politicians is enormous. Lord Melbourne, you will remember, when asked his opinion of men, replied, with his accustomed expletive, which I omit as unfit for the polite ear of Cowdenbeath, 'Good fellows, very good fellows, but vain, 'very vain.'

There is a great deal of vanity, both expressed and concealed, in the House of Commons. I often wonder why, for I

cannot imagine a place where men so habitually disregard each other's feelings, so openly trample on each other's egotisms. You rise to address the House. The Speaker calls on you by name. You begin your speech. Hardly are you through with the first sentence when your oldest friend, your college chum, the man you have appointed guardian of your infant children, rises in his place, gives you a stony stare, and, seizing his hat in his hand, ostentatiously walks out of the House, as much as to say, 'I can stand 'many things, but not this.'

Whilst speaking in the House I have never failed to notice one man, at all events, who was paying me the compliment of the closest attention, who never took his eyes off me, who hung upon my words, on whom everything I was saying seemed to be making the greatest impression. In my early days I used to address myself to this man, and try my best to make my discourse worthy of his attention; but sad experience has taught me that this solitary auditor is not in the least interested either in me or in my speech, and that the only reason why he listens so intently and eyes me so closely

is because he has made up his mind to follow me, and is eager to leap to his feet, in the hope of catching the Speaker's eye, the very moment I sit down. Yet, for all this, vanity thrives in the House—though what it feeds on I cannot say. We are all anxious to exaggerate our own importance, and desperately anxious to make reputations for ourselves and to have our names associated with some subject—to pose as its patron and friend. On great Parliamentary nights these vanities, from which even our leaders are not wholly exempt, are very conspicuous. On such occasions the House of Commons has reminded me of a great drying-ground, where all the clothes of a neighbourhood may be seen fluttering in a gale of wind. There are night-gowns and shirts and petticoats so distended and distorted by the breeze as to seem the garments of a race of giants, rather than of poor mortal man; even the stockings of some slim maiden, when puffed out by the lawless wind, assume dropsical proportions. But the wind sinks, having done its task, and then the matter-of-fact washerwoman unpegs the garments, sprinkles them with water, and ruthlessly passes over them

her flat-irons, and, lo and behold! these giant's robes are reduced to their familiar, domestic, and insignificant proportions.

A marked characteristic of the House of Commons is its generosity. We have heard far too much lately of contending jealousies. The only thing the House is really jealous of is its own reputation. If a member, no matter who he is, or where he sits, or what he says, makes a good speech and creates a powerful impression, nobody is more delighted, more expansively and effusively delighted, than Sir William Harcourt. On such occasions he glows with generosity. And this is equally true of Mr. Balfour, and indeed of the whole House, which invariably welcomes talent and rejoices over growing reputations.

Members of Parliament may be divided into two classes: Front Bench men and Back Bench men. The former are those who fill or have filled posts in an Administration, and they sit either on the Government Bench or on the Front Opposition Bench. These personages enjoy certain privileges, and the most obvious of these privileges is that they speak with a table in front of them, whereby they are enabled cunningly to conceal their notes. Now,

the private or Back Bench member has no place in which to conceal his notes, save his hat, a structure ill-fitted for the purpose. Another of the privileges of a Front Bench man is that he has, or is supposed to have, a right of intervention in debate just when he chooses. This is an enormous advantage. Just consider the unhappy fate of a private member who is anxious to speak during an important debate. He prepares his speech, and comes down to the House with it concealed about his person. He bides his time; an excellent opportunity occurs; nobody has as yet said what he is going to say; he rises in his place; but, alas! fifteen other members with fifteen other speeches in their pockets rise too, and the Speaker calls on one of them, and down falls our unhappy member, to wait another opportunity. This may happen frequently, and often does happen fifteen or sixteen times. He has to sit still and hear other men mangle his arguments, quote his quotations. Night follows night, and the speech remains undelivered, festering in his brain, polluting his mind. At last he gets his chance—the Speaker calls out his name; but by this time he has got sick of the

subject—it has grown weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable. He has lost his interest, and soon loses the thread of his discourse; he flounders and flops, has recourse to his hat, repeats himself, grows hot and uncomfortable, forgets his best points, and finally sits down dejected, discouraged, disappointed. And all the time his wife is in the Ladies' Gallery gnashing her teeth at the poor figure he is cutting! No wonder he hates the Front Bench man. But there are gradations in the Front Bench. Between the leaders of the House, who bag all the best moments, and the humble Under Secretary or Civil Lord there is a great gulf fixed. These latter gentry are not allowed to speak at all, except on matters relating to their departments, or when they are told off to speak by the leader. Nothing is more amusing than to notice the entire eclipse of some notorious chatterbox who has been given some minor post in an Administration. Before he took office he was chirping on every bough; hardly a night passed but his sweet voice was to be heard. After he has taken office he frequently has to hold his tongue for a whole session. Poor fellow! he will sometimes buttonhole you in the Lobby, and

almost tearfully complain of the irksomeness of office, and tell you how he longs for the hour of emancipation, when once more his voice, like that of the turtle, shall be heard in the land. If you gently remind him of the salary he draws, and hint that it may be some consolation even for silence, ten to one he walks away in a huff, and attributes your innocent remarks to jealousy. Between the Front Bench and the Back Bench there has always been a feud. Front Bench men of the first rank are too apt, so it is said, to regard the House of Commons as a show run for their benefit, to look upon themselves as a race of actor-managers who arrange the playbill, and divide all the best parts among themselves. The traditions of Parliament foster this idea. But the Back Bench men are not always in the mood to submit to be for ever either the audience or the supernumeraries, and whenever they get the chance of asserting themselves against their leaders they take it. But in public they seldom get the chance, so they have to content themselves with being as disagreeable in private as they possibly can. What I think is a just complaint, frequently made by Back Benchers, relates to the

habit Parliamentary leaders of late have greatly indulged in, of occupying an enormous amount of time abusing one another for past inconsistencies of conduct. These amenities, sometimes called *tu quoques*, or 'You are another,' are infinitely wearisome, and proceed upon the mistaken assumption that the House of Commons greatly concerns itself with the political reputation of its leaders. It does nothing of the sort. What it wants is leaders who can make business go, who will show sport, and lead their hounds across a good line of country.

As a Back Benchman, the only real complaint I have to make is of the woeful waste of time. One goes down to the House every day—Saturdays and Wednesdays excepted—at 4 o'clock, and you are supposed to remain there till midnight. On Wednesdays the House meets at 12 and adjourns at 5.30. What do we do all this time? To be interested in everything that is going on is flatly impossible. A quantity of the business is of a local character, dealing with places and schemes of which we know and can know nothing. Then there are terribly protracted debates on the second readings of Bills, occasionally interesting, but necessarily full of repeti-

tions. I do not well see how this is to be prevented; but it is a shocking infliction. The Committee stage of a Bill you have really mastered is interesting and instructive, but even this stage is too protracted; and then comes a later stage—the report stage—when a great deal is said all over again; and even this is frequently followed by a debate on the third reading. Of course, you are not in the House all the time. There is the Library, the Tea-room, and the Smoking-room, where you may play chess and draughts, but no other game whatsoever. But nobody does anything vehemently. An air of languor pervades the whole place. Listlessness abounds. Members stroll from one room to another, turn over the newspapers, and yawn in each other's faces. In the summer months, the Terrace by the riverside has been recently converted into a kind of watering-place. From five o'clock to seven it is crowded with fine ladies and country cousins, drinking tea and devouring strawberries. Occasionally some Parliamentary person of importance will choose to stalk by, and even—such is the affability of true greatness—have a cup of tea with a party of friends. A poorer way of

killing time has not, I think, yet been discovered; but it is a convincing proof of the *ennui* of Parliamentary life.

The great problem of Ministers is the reform of the rules of the House of Commons —how to make the House at once a deliberative and yet a business-like assembly.

And yet men do not willingly strike off the chains of this slavery. A private member of Parliament nowadays gets nothing, neither pudding nor praise, in exchange for his time and his money. Patronage he has absolutely none—not a single place, even in the Post-Office, to give away. Nor has he a single privilege that I am aware of. His routine duties on committees are onerous, nor are his opportunities of making speeches, if he wishes to do so, otherwise than few and far between. His leaders treat him with frigid civility, and nobody cares for a letter from him unless it encloses a postal order for at least ten shillings. And yet the labour of winning a seat and of retaining a seat is very great; nor is the expense insignificant.

When one thinks of all the different ways of spending £700, a Parliamentary election does not obviously strike you as

being one of the most delightful. It may be said you have the opportunity of legislating on your own account. You may bring in a Bill of your own, and have the satisfaction of hearing it read a third time. Hardly is this true. In former days some of the most useful laws in the Statute Book were pioneered through the House by private members. But now, so greedy have Governments become, that they take nearly all the time available for legislative purposes, and, unless the private member gets the first place in the ballot, he has not a chance of carrying any measure through if it excites the least opposition. But when all is said and done, the House of Commons is a fascinating place. It has one great passion, one genuine feeling, and that is, to represent and give practical expression to the mind of the whole nation. It has no prejudices in this matter, for it has no existence independent of its creators. It has nothing to do with the choice of its component parts. The constituencies may send up whom they choose, but these persons, when they do come up, must not expect to be hailed as 'Saviours of Society.' No; they must be content to be parts of a whole, to give and take, to hear their pet

creeds, faiths, and fancies rudely questioned, tested, and weighed. A great nation will never consent to be dominated either by a sect or by an interest. And yet, if the House of Commons has a leaning to any particular class of member—which by rights it ought not to have—it is for an increased direct representation of the wage-earning community. I hope such representatives may be forthcoming in greater numbers as time goes on. But if they are to do any good in the House of Commons, they must go there, not as conquering heroes to whom the unknown future belongs, but as Britons anxious to contribute out of their special knowledge, from their hived experience, to the collective wisdom of the nation; they must be willing to learn as well as to teach, to increase the stock of their information, to acknowledge mistakes, to widen their views; and, above all, must they recognise that the mighty river of our national existence, if it is to continue to flow as triumphantly as before, must continue to be fed by many tributary streams.

There are, I know, those who affect to believe that representative assemblies do not stand where they did, and that the day

of their doom is not far distant. I see no reason to believe anything of the kind, for, scan the horizon as you may, you cannot discover what there is to take their place. We have no mind for military despotisms, even if we had a military hero. Nor are we disposed to believe in the superior wisdom of that so-called statesmanship which is manufactured in Government offices. Better by far the occasional mistakes of a free people and a popular assembly than the deadly and persistent errors of diplomatists and hereditary statesmen. The House of Commons will, I cannot doubt, be still going on when the twentieth century breathes its last. Change it will know, and reform; but, founded as it is upon a rational and manly system of representation, why should it not always continue to reflect, cautiously but truthfully, the mind and will of the British people?

X

SIR ROBERT PEEL

(MAY, 1899)

ENGLISH politicians, though of the first rank, must usually be content, like the heroes of the mimic stage, with full houses and loud cheers; with the verdicts of their contemporaries; the enthusiasm of their supporters; the respect of their opponents; with the loves and hates and jealousies of an active life; the sense of full days and stirring events, of proud moments and realized ambitions. Opportunists they all were, of course, else had they not been British statesmen and pilots in the dark hours. We do not search their memoirs for pregnant sayings, and if we read their speeches at all, Burke's only excepted, it is for purely party purposes, certainly not for intellectual profit or æsthetic enjoyment.

To survey the comely series of volumes which contain the orations of our great Parliamentary figures from Pitt to Gladstone, is to summon up the same thoughts and to create the same atmosphere of melancholy pleasure, as when in some Green Room library you take down from a seldom-visited shelf copies of the old plays in which a Betterton or a Garrick, a Siddons or a Jordan, once took the town by storm. Charles Lamb has moralized on old playbills; old orders of the day might well provoke kindred reflections.

When a great politician dies, a man whose name has been on the tongues of all, and in every kind of type for scores of years, the good-hearted British public makes the matutinal observations, conventionally described as 'mourning a loss'; attends his funeral or memorial service, and then, after scratching his name on the Abbey stones or elsewhere, is well content to leave him alone for evermore with the epithet or attribute it deems most appropriate to attach to his name. Thus, Pitt is majestic, Fox generous, Canning splendid, Palmerston patriotic, John Russell plucky, Disraeli romantic, Gladstone religious; and so on. Nor are these epithets

open to revision. Whatever records leap to life they are not in the least likely to be altered. The fact is, Englishmen understand their political leaders from top to toe. They have never mistaken them for saints, heroes, or philosophers. Indeed, they know them to be sinners, usually as blind to the future as the grocer down the street, and occasionally as ignorant of the past as the publican at the corner, but who for all that stood like men for their brief hour on the quarter-deck of the big ship, which is still groaning and grunting on its way. At all events, they never ran her aground.

Sir Robert Peel was born in 1788, in the old world, as one may say. And now, 111 years afterwards, in a quite new world, in a country which takes every year from the pockets of its people £110,000,000 sterling, we are for the first time supplied with the materials necessary for forming what is called an instructed opinion upon his most remarkable public career. Everything is placed at our service, all is well arranged and clearly expressed, nothing seems kept back that relates to a public life; and yet for the purposes of reviewing contemporary judgments, or of revising the careless

tradition of the street, or of enabling us to sit with confidence in the seat of judgment, I do not know that we find ourselves much better off than we were before. Affidavit-evidence is now universally despised, and to form an opinion of a public man from his memoranda and speeches, is to rely upon the same dead-alive testimony. A good portrait, as Carlyle used to say, is half the battle, but there is no great picture of Peel—the best is the word-portrait of Disraeli.

The angry passions of 1829 and 1845 have not permanently disfigured the character of Peel. They were fierce enough. Politicians who have lived through the years 1886-1894 can have no difficulty in appreciating the fury with which Peel was assailed by Protestant bigotry and Protectionist zeal, or how old friendships (so-called) were severed, and party ties broken. He was fortunate in one respect. Through it all Wellington stood by his side. It was no doubt hard to hear Sir Edward Knatchbull exclaim '*Nusquam tuta fides*,' almost intolerable to have to submit to the heartless raillery of Disraeli, hardest of all to look into his own heart and know that his ill-timed obstinacy had (perhaps) robbed Canning of what in

his hands might have been a glorious triumph, and his well-timed conversion deprived Villiers of what would have been a famous victory. It is, however, the business of politicians to do a good deal of night-poaching, and it is a pardonable weakness to believe that an intelligent Providence must have meant *you* and not gentlemen opposite to save the country.

Peel entered Parliament for an Irish borough in 1809, when he was just of age. Is this a good thing? Lord Halifax, the Trimmer, thought not, and in his shrewd hints for the choice of Members of Parliament, gives his reasons. Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, thought it was. Certainly few men become parliamentary hands quickly. For the business of a statesman ten years is a short apprenticeship, but it is a good-sized slice out of a life. There seems no very obvious reason why a seat in the House of Commons should either arrest a young man's intellectual development or ossify his imagination, yet if the young man is by the order of his mind slow-moving, prim, frigid and mechanical, if he possesses none of that dangerous but precious acid which dissipates platitudes and disintegrates falsehoods, if he is apt to

be a little uncomfortable in the presence of actual fact, but very much at his ease when amplifying and expounding in sonorous periods bookish conceptions and notions; and if to these positive and negative qualities he adds a liking for office and an aptitude for business, then it is that an early adoption of party creeds and party connections and a complete immersion into the affairs of the hour, are certain to impede the free swing of the mind and the full muscular development of a truth-loving intelligence.

Robert Peel had an orderly mind, quick to absorb, ready to assimilate, and slow to deny. He never revolted from a lie, but slowly ceased to believe in it. He merely entertained his ideas, and therefore never found it hard to cease to be 'at home' to any of them. He had none of the mental vehemence of his great pupil, who, none the less, was equally destined to do a great deal of unloading. It has been said of Mr. Gladstone, and with perfect truth, that he was never either a Whig or a Protestant. He arrived at his Liberalism by paths untrodden by the huge hosts of his followers, who had to be content to cheer the result without studying the process.

Peel, like Gladstone, was brought up among Tories, and received a sound classical education in Tory strongholds, from port-wine dons, and divines bent on being bishops, the very last people in the world to teach their pupils to verify the accepted formulas of Church and State. The remark used often to be made that Peel was sprung from the people. In the already old-fashioned days of which Mr. Samuel Smiles was the popular *vates*, 'the rise of 'the Peel family' was a favourite subject for the thrifty muse, and there were sentimentalists ready to attribute Sir Robert's genuine devotion to the cause of labour and his fierce desire to cheapen living to his ancestry. But in England, where we are all woven strangely of the same piece, these things count for very little. Between a decent agricultural labourer and a decent duke there are no differences which cannot be easily accounted for by those personal habits which are engendered by their different ways of life. Twenty years in big houses, in labourers' cottages, in merchants' villas, in artisans' dwellings, in Whitechapel tenements, will explain all the differences noticeable between the varied ranks of her Majesty's lieges. Peel is said

to have had a provincial accent. Of the three great Lancashire orators of our own time, Lord Derby, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, the last alone was spotless in this matter; for a quick Lancastrian ear could easily detect his native accents in the scholarly tones of Gladstone, whilst they flourished unabashed in the manly discourse of the Rupert of debate. The Peel pedigree need not detain us. The gentleman-commoner of Christ Church of 1806 was like the rest of his brethren, except in one fortunate particular. He was the heir to great wealth, not made out of the ownership of the soil. Peel was destined to fight the landed interest, which then sought to throttle the nation, even as his high-spirited son is now engaged in fighting the drink interest, which seeks to throttle us. What made Peel's contest especially bitter was that the wounded country gentlemen had to confess that the pinion that impelled the fatal steel had been nourished in their own nurseries, and been awarded the pet diploma of the greedy monopolist, the representation in Parliament of the University of Oxford. And yet never was statesman more truly conservative in all his mental methods than Sir Robert Peel, whose tor-

tured spirit never sought to escape from the blunt brutalities of the squires, or the poisoned invective of their hired bravo, by the simple expedient of throwing wide open the windows of his mind and letting the free air of heaven sweep through its chambers. The history of the landed interest in England from the date when it plundered the Church of the territories that were intended to be, and often were, the support of the poor and the shelter of the aged, to the unhappy hour when it turned a deaf, because a selfish, ear to the report of the Devon Commission, has never yet been written; and to write it now would be, so far as the agricultural interest is concerned, to trample on a poverty-stricken race, who barely contrive to go on existing by avoiding those contributions to the Army and Navy which, under the name of death duties, are levied upon cash values only.

Insolent in the hour of its prosperity, the landed interest has become mean in more straitened circumstances. But even had its history been composed in Peel's time, he would have taken no pleasure in the perusal, so rooted was his love for the order of things as he found them. The

conservatism of most men is based on fear and a lively sense of the risks to which all Governments are exposed. The surprising thing is that society should exist at all, and that dividends should go on being paid at the Bank. Any condition of things that has proved itself to be compatible with a social *status quo* is to be respected by statesmen, and, if possible, revered by the populace. Sobriety, security, and peace were the real objects of Peel's devotion. Had the Dissenters of England been as strong as the Roman Catholics in Ireland, Peel would have disestablished and disendowed the Church of England on the best terms he could get for her, nor would his pillow ever have been haunted by ghosts in lawn. He had a true statesman's horror of enthusiasts and martyrs. So that he might dodge revolution and avoid bloodshed, there were few sacrifices he was not prepared to make. He had not, indeed, reduced the art of capitulation to the simple formula of his colleague the great Duke, who, whenever driven into a corner, was content to put the question, 'How is the Government of the King (or 'Queen) to be carried on?' And then, having answered it in a particular way, pro-

ceeded to repudiate all his former political notes-of-hand with the effrontery of a South American Republic. Peel was a man who intellectualized his apostasies. True it was that he was taught by circumstance, and trod the tortuous paths of party rather than the narrow way of truth; still, he had a mind which, like some plants, instinctively turned to the light. Seriousness has not been a common quality with English Prime Ministers. The lightheartedness of most of them is amazing. Even the horrors of the criminal code have never turned a politician's stomach. Peel was a serious Minister, always, so Mr. Disraeli complained, 'absorbed in thought.' The Condition of England Question weighed more heavily on the statesman than ever it did on the novelist, although the imaginative genius of the latter enabled him without pain or labour to see deeper into the cauldron than could the former. But Disraeli did nothing for England, Peel saved her. 'There was always,' said Mr. Disraeli half-contemptuously, 'some person 'representing some theory or system exer-'cising an influence over his mind.' Forcible is the retort made by Mr. Thursfield in his short *Life of Peel*, the authority of

which remains unimpaired by the elaborate publications of Mr. Parker: 'To have 'learned the principles of currency and 'finance from Ricardo, Horner and Hus-'kisson, the principles of criminal legisla-'tion from Romilly and Mackintosh, and 'the principles of free trade from Villiers 'and Cobden, was not Peel's reproach but 'his everlasting honour.'

No statesman of the century has left his mark so plainly inscribed upon both the Statute Book and the life and business of the nation as Sir Robert Peel. He it was who resumed cash payments, established a gold standard, and told us 'What is a 'pound.' He was the author of the Bank Charter Act, and of the sweet simplicity of the Three per Cents. We owe it to Sir Robert Peel that the Income Tax is always with us, and that a policeman is, or ought to be, at the corner of every street. The Budgets of 1842 and 1845 are chapters in our financial history, for was it not Peel who taught us to fight hostile tariffs with free imports? Across Ireland the names of most Chief Secretaries are writ in water, but Peel left behind him that constabulary force of which we hear every year when the Irish Estimates come on for discussion.

The law reformer loves the name of Peel, who humanized the criminal code, and showed, at least, a willingness to listen to the voice of Bentham and to recast our judicature. Finally, he emancipated the Catholics, and carried free trade in corn. Here is a programme indeed, by the side of which that of Newcastle may well pale its ineffectual fires. Yet we are always told there was something sinister about the career of Peel. There is a slouch in the gait of our deliverer. What is it? It is to be found in Greville's famous maxim, 'The Tories only can carry Liberal 'measures.' The men behind Peel cried, 'Traitor!' and the men in front of him murmured, 'Thief!' 'The right honour-'able gentleman's life,' said Mr. Disraeli, 'has been one vast appropriation clause.'

It was the subsequent boast of Disraeli, himself one of the most light-fingered of the fraternity, that he had educated his party, though what he really thought of the process to which he had subjected them it is better only guessing. Peel could not honestly say that he had educated his party, but as he succeeded in coercing it, no good Liberal will grudge him his splendid record of great achievements or

his imperishable fame. In these respects Peel is an exception to the general rule that encompasses departed statesmen in a trailing cloud of forgetfulness.

Mr. Parker's three capacious volumes* enable us to form (if we are sufficiently imaginative and have any knowledge of affairs) an estimate of the great compass of Peel's public interests and his devotion to business. We see Mr. Gladstone's schoolmaster abroad in every page. Peel had a passion for good government and for competency in high places. In his disposition of patronage he was 'a kinless 'loon,' and passed over his brethren after a fashion which still excites our wonder. Nor was it only his own brothers; those of his colleagues fared no better.

We find Goulburn, who wanted his brother made a Judge, writing to Peel in 1835:

'When there are no superior qualifica-'tions evidently marking out a man for an 'office, it is, I think, impolitic to select for 'appointment those men who have been 'uniformly opposed to a Government or

* *Sir Robert Peel from his Private Papers.* Edited for his Trustees by C. S. Parker. Three vols. London: John Murray.

'only recently converted. I may live [*mark the sarcasm*] in a peculiar society, but I 'can assure you that I find nothing more 'prejudicial to our interests than the im- 'pression which prevails that such is our 'course. It deadens the exertions of zealous 'friends, and it makes the large mass, 'namely, those who act on interested mo- 'tives, oppose us as a matter of profitable 'speculation. I believe that we have 'suffered more from making Abercrombie 'Chief Baron than from any act of our last 'Administration. So much I have thought 'it right to say on public grounds' (vol. ii., p. 273).

How familiar are the accents of the jobber! Mr. Goulburn was quite right in hinting that it was Peel, and not his Chancellor of the Exchequer, who kept peculiar society. Nothing is rarer in our public men than a genuine devotion to *all* branches of the public service. Peel kept his eye on everything, even meditating a reform of the Scottish judicature. One disadvantage of the democratic system is that a Prime Minister no longer feels himself responsible for good government. He awaits 'a man- 'date' from a mob who are watching a football match.

Full, however, to overflowing as was Peel's public life, the three most interesting things in its retrospect are his handling of Catholic Emancipation, his attitude towards Parliamentary Reform, and his dealings with Wheat. It was the way he dealt with these questions that puzzled his friends, piqued his opponents, and brought down upon his head the wrath of Oxford Combination-rooms and the fury of farmers' ordinaries. Peel was long a puzzle. 'What will Peel do?' was for decades as provocative a question as his own famous query, 'What is a Pound?'

It cannot be said that Mr. Parker's volumes throw any entirely new light upon Peel's attitude, but they enable us at our leisure and in the ample detail of Peel's own elaborate diction to follow the mental operations and digest the conclusions of a cautious, sagacious, and ambitious man whose lot was cast in perilous times. Nor can we help being repeatedly reminded of incidents in the career of Mr. Gladstone and of similarities, both of style, and in the treatment of public questions, existing between the Master and the Pupil.

The Catholic Question stared Peel in the face from the very beginning. It was

like the Catholic University Question of to-day, left open. Cabinet Ministers were free to be Emancipators if they chose so long as they made no attempt upon the King's virtue. Peel had no passionate convictions about anything save the public credit and the administration of just laws by honest men, but his early associations with the stupid party, and the company he kept whilst Irish Chief Secretary from 1812-1818, had taught him to regard Protestant ascendancy as a condition of government not lightly to be disturbed. In 1817 his political education was sorely encumbered by his proudly donning the chains which Canning had gloriously renounced, which Gladstone was destined too long to clank—the Parliamentary representation of the University of Oxford, a constituency which has never consented to be represented by a man who has saved his country. The University muzzled Mr. Gladstone, it hindered and delayed Peel, who saw clearly enough that Catholic Relief was only a question of time. Canning openly espoused the cause, even as Mr. Balfour has done the kindred question of the present day. The House of Commons was at least equally divided; the

House of Lords, despite a majority of forty against Relief, has never really fought any measure of reform recommended to it by a Tory Minister; and as for the Crown, Peel's lofty spirit scorned a policy which should be founded (to use his own words) 'merely on the will or scruples of 'the King.' The contempt entertained both by Peel and Wellington for George IV. and William IV. gives quite a literary flavour to many of the letters of the two statesmen. But though Peel saw Emancipation afar off, he had no mind to be mixed up in it. It was Canning's question, and between Canning and Peel there was a very imperfect sympathy. Mr. Disraeli tells us that Canning was jealous of Peel, and that Peel did not like Canning. This need not surprise us. Peel was not famous for his friendships. The old Duke, whose behaviour to Peel was angelical, never could be got to believe that Peel did not actually dislike him. To keep Wellington and Peel on speaking terms was quite an occupation for a number of wealthy gentlemen, and inspired many a dull dinner-party in the thirties and forties. The old Tory party hated Canning, fierce anti-Reformer though

he was, with the hatred it has ever felt 'for d——d intellect.' Arbuthnot writes to Peel just after Canning's death to remind him 'that our great Tory and aristo-'cratical support was caused by the dislike 'and dread of Canning.' Peel relied upon Tory and aristocratical support, and, consequently, when Lord Liverpool retired, and Canning fiercely claimed the succession and obtained (somehow or another) a great hold upon the King, Peel and Wellington cleared out and left Canning to make terms with Lord Lansdowne and a section of the Whigs. Peel did not leave on the Catholic Question, for that was not to be agitated; he left because he would not work with Canning. The old King of Terrors dominates Parliaments. Canning's sudden removal from the playhouse of St. Stephen's made it much easier for Peel to add a new part to his *répertoire*, namely, the character of an emancipator. Canning died in office in August, 1827. In January, 1829, a complete measure of Catholic Relief was decided upon by the Duke's Government, and the man to introduce it to the House of Commons was the statesman who, whenever Canning had advocated Emancipation, had risen from the same

bench to protest against it in language which drew down upon him the benedictions of the Protestants of Ireland. Oxford revolted. Peel resigned his seat, and after a contest the University found a much fitter representative in another Sir Robert whose surname was Inglis. The Bill became law in March, 1829. Does anybody ask what became of the majority of forty against Emancipation in our second Chamber? The answer must be that in 1829 the House of Lords was Wellington's pocket-borough, just as in 1899 it is Lord Salisbury's. Had the Whigs introduced Catholic Emancipation in 1829 the Lords would have treated it as they did Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill in 1894; but as the measure was countersigned by Wellington they treated it as they did Lord Salisbury's Vaccination Bill in 1898. Were I a Tory averse to Socialistic measures I would rather rely upon the sober, deep-rooted conservatism of the English people than upon the House of Lords.

Peel's vindication is, of course, that fascinating river—the Father Tiber to whom all politicians pray—the course or current of events. The Clare Election, the revolt of the tenants, the transfer by the

will of Parliament of political power from one party to another! Let us listen for a moment to the grave voice of Peel:

'This afforded a decisive proof not only 'that the instrument on which the Protes- 'tant proprietor had hitherto mainly relied 'for the maintenance of his political influ- 'ence [the forty-shilling franchise for 'tenants] had completely failed him, but 'that through the combined exertions of 'the agitator and the priest—or, I should 'rather say, through the contagious sym- 'pathies of a common cause among all 'classes of the Roman Catholic population '—the instrument of defence and supremacy 'had been converted into a weapon fatal to 'the authority of the landlord.'

'However men might differ as to the 'consequences which ought to follow the 'event, no one denied its vast importance. 'It was foreseen by the most intelligent 'men that the Clare election would be 'the turning-point in the Catholic Ques- 'tion, the point *partes ubi se via findit in 'ambas*.'

'"Concede nothing to agitation" is the 'ready cry of those who are not responsible, 'the vigour of whose decisions is often pro- 'portionate to their own personal immunity

'from danger and to their imperfect know-
'ledge of the true state of affairs.'

'A prudent Minister before he determines
'against all concession, against any yield-
'ing or compromise of former opinions,
'must well consider what it is that he has
'to resist and what are his powers of re-
'sistance. His task would be an easy one
'if it were sufficient to resolve that he
'would yield nothing to violence or to the
'menace of physical force.'

'What was the evil to be apprehended?
'Not force, not violence, not any act of
'which the law could take cognisance.
'The real danger was in the peaceable and
'legitimate exercise of a franchise accord-
'ing to the will and conscience of the
'holder.'

'In such an exercise of that franchise,
'not merely permitted, but encouraged and
'approved by constitutional law, was in-
'volved a revolution in the electoral sys-
'tem of Ireland, the transfer of political
'power, so far as it was connected with
'representation, from one party to another'
(vol. ii., p. 48).

'If the Irish Government could neither
'turn for aid to the then existing Parlia-
'ment, nor could cherish the hope of re-

'ceiving it from one to be newly elected, 'could it safely trust for the maintenance 'of its authority to the extreme exercise of 'its ordinary powers, supported, in the case 'of necessity, by the organized and disci- 'plined force at its command, namely, the 'constabulary and military force?' (vol. ii., p. 49).

'I deliberately affirm that a Minister of 'the Crown responsible at the time of which 'I am speaking for the public peace and 'the public welfare would have grossly and 'scandalously neglected his duty if he had 'failed to consider whether it might not be 'possible that the fever of religious and 'political excitement—which was quicken- 'ing the pulse and fluttering the bosom of 'the whole Catholic population, which had 'inspired the serf of Clare with the resolu- 'tion and energy of a freeman, which had 'in the twinkling of an eye made all con- 'sideration of personal gratitude, ancient 'family connection, local preferences, the 'fear of worldly injury, the hope of worldly 'advantage subordinate to one absorbing 'sense of religious obligation and public 'duty—whether, I say, it might not be 'possible that the contagion of that fever- 'ish excitement might spread beyond the

'barriers which, under ordinary circum-
'stances, the habits of military obedience
'and the strictness of military discipline
'oppose to all such external influences'
(vol. ii., p. 50).

This surely is convincing. But should Peel have been the man to tackle the job? He did not want to do so. He begged hard to be allowed to stand aside. The Duke was a plain soldier, ready enough, as Huskisson once found, to take even a politician at his first word; but the Duke would not take Peel at his first or second word, but made it plain to him (as perhaps it was plain before) that without him the Relief Bill must be abandoned. 'I entreat
'you, then, to reconsider the subject, and
'to give us and the country the benefit of
'your advice and assistance in this most
'difficult and important crisis.' So wrote the Duke (vol. ii., p. 81).

Peel consented. It required enormous courage.

'We were about to forfeit the confidence
'and encounter the hostility of a very great
'portion of our own party. The principle
'of concession had been affirmed by the
'House of Commons in the last discussion
'by the very smallest majority—272 to 266.

'It had been negatived in the House of 'Lords by a majority of 40. The King 'was hostile, the Church was hostile, a 'majority probably of the people of Great 'Britain was hostile, to concession' (vol. ii., p. 85).

Oh for an hour, in these cowardly days, of a statesman with a tithe of the courage of Sir Robert Peel!

'In a single session Peel and Wellington 'overcame the resistance of a hostile 'Sovereign, a hostile Church, a hostile 'House of Lords, and a public opinion fast 'becoming hostile.' So writes Mr. Thursfield, who also reminds us of the fine compliment paid by Peel in his speech on the second reading to the injured 'shade' of Canning. 'Would he were here,' cried Peel, 'to enjoy the fruits of his victory!'

'Tuque tuis armis, nos te poteremur Achille.'

Admirably does Mr. Thursfield proceed:

'The tribute was well merited and not 'ungenerously expressed; but perhaps, if 'the shade of Canning could have revisited 'the House of Commons and could have 'watched Peel, shorn of the prize for which 'both had contended, writhing in agony at 'the whips and scorns of time, the irony of

'circumstance, the revenge of neglected 'opportunities, and the reproaches of friends 'who felt themselves abandoned and be- 'trayed, the words to rise almost unbidden 'to his phantom lips would have been :

'"Pallas te, hoc vulnere, Pallas
Immolat, et pœnas scelerato ex sanguine sumit."'

There is no end to capping verses. The compliments rival politicians occasionally pay one another are apt to be a little over-done. Great questions belong to the nation and not to individuals, however eloquent or long-winded. Besides, it is always easier to be generous to the dead than just to the living. Peel's conduct in this matter gave an envious stab at his reputation. He was 'suspect' from that hour. One of his friends took on so about it that he had to be blooded (vol. ii., p. 94). He (the phlebotomised friend) got over it, for we find him in 1834 breathing a fervent prayer that Peel might be 'destined by the 'Almighty to save the country at the 'moment of peril' (vol. ii., p. 262). Peel was the most prayed-over politician of recent times.

In the matter of Parliamentary Reform Peel was from the first a Moderate. He

was the last man in the world to share Burke's romantic attachment to rotten boroughs, or the Duke of Wellington's babyish aversion to big towns; nor was he gifted or cursed with the foresight of Canning, who perceived that a reformed House of Commons must eventually prove fatal to the pretensions of the landed interest in the House of Lords. Speaking at Liverpool in 1820, Canning had asked:

'When once the House of Commons 'should become a mere deputation speak-'ing the people's will, by what assumption 'of right could three or four hundred great 'proprietors set themselves against the 'national will?'

Peel was in favour of going slowly in the matter, and when opportunity offered (as it frequently did), of giving large towns parliamentary representation; but the Duke was obdurate, and the omniscient Croker was certain that the country was indifferent. We all know what happened. The flames of Nottingham Castle and the Bristol mobs intimidated the House of Lords, who in 1832 yielded to fear as in 1829 they yielded to the Duke.

Peel's opposition to reform can best be explained in his own words:

'Why have we been struggling against 'the Reform Bill in the House of Commons? 'Not in the hope of resisting its final 'success in that House, but because we 'look beyond the Bill, because we know the 'nature of popular concessions, their ten-'dency to propagate the necessity for 'further and more extensive compliances. 'We want to make the *descensus* as *difficilis* 'as we can—to teach young inexperienced 'men charged with the trust of government 'that, though they may be backed by 'popular clamour, they shall not override, 'on the first springtide of excitement, every 'barrier and breakwater raised against 'popular impulses; that the carrying of 'extensive changes in the Constitution with-'out previous deliberation shall not be a 'holiday task; that there shall be just 'what has happened—the House sick of 'the question, the Ministers repenting they 'brought it forward, the country paying 'the penalty for the folly and incapacity of 'its rulers. All these are salutary suffer-'ings, that may, I trust, make people here-'after distinguish between the amendment 'and the overturning of their institutions' (vol. ii., p. 201).

When the second Reform Bill had been

defeated in the Lords on Lyndhurst's amendment, and Lord Grey resigned, the Duke of Wellington, whose political stomach could digest anything, was ready and willing, and even anxious, to form an Administration, and become responsible for 'an extensive measure' of parliamentary reform. He could not do this without Peel, and Peel would not on this occasion come to his assistance. The Duke never quite forgave Peel for this. Even Croker was on the Duke's side, but Peel was adamant. When reminded of his behaviour in 1829, he replied emphatically:

'It is *not* a repetition of the Catholic 'Question. I was then in office. I had 'advised the concession as a Minister. I 'should now assume office for the purpose 'of carrying the measure to which up to 'the last moment I have been inveterately 'opposed' (vol. ii., p. 206).

There can be no doubt he was right. It was all very well for the hero of Waterloo to play what pranks he chose in the political arena, but Peel was not a soldier but a statesman. Besides, after the events that had happened a compromise was impossible.

Peel's connection with the duties on

corn is a thrice-told tale. If he is the victor who remains in possession of the field, nothing can now be said to impair the fame of the great statesman who, though surrounded as he was in the House he so dearly loved by men impervious to reason and indifferent to human suffering, resolutely thrust them behind him, and pursued amidst 'detractions rude' the path of Free Trade and gave the people bread. His conversion may have been slow, but it was sure. His face was always turned to the cheap markets. Cobden, a not too generous foe, as early as 1842 pronounced Peel a free-trader. His budgets made it plain, his speeches were full of Free Trade. Corn, doubtless, always stood by itself. The staple produce of the land could hardly do otherwise in the mind of the leader of a party which, as Lord Ashburton put it in 1841, 'was pledged to the support of the 'land; that principle abandoned, the party 'is dissolved' (vol. ii., p. 507). It may well be that it was bad harvests and wet seasons that eventually forced Peel's hands, but it was not Peel's hands for which we may thank God—but his open mind. Let us listen again to the voice of Peel:

'The Tariff does not go half far enough.

'If we could afford it, we ought to take off 'the duty on cotton-wools and the duty on 'foreign sheep's wool' (vol. ii., p. 529).

'We must make this country a cheap 'country for living and thus induce parties 'to remain here, enable them to consume 'more by having more to spend' (vol. ii., p. 530).

'The danger is not low prices from the 'Tariff, but low prices from inability to 'consume.'

'If Sir Charles Burrell had such cases 'before him as I have of thousands and tens 'of thousands in want of food and employ-'ment at Greenock, Paisley, Edinburgh, 'and a dozen large towns in the manu-'facturing districts, he would not expect 'me to rend my garments in despair if '"some excellent jerked beef from South '"America" should get into the English 'market and bring down meat from 7½d. or '8d. a pound' (vol. ii., p. 531).

To the Marquis of Ailsa Peel wrote in March, 1842:

'Whatever the future may be, no one 'can think the present state of things very 'satisfactory. If I were a landed proprie-'tor in the West of Scotland, and saw '17,000 persons supported during the

'winter, as in one Scotch town, Paisley, 'by charitable contributions, I should 'seriously inquire whether the continu- 'ance of such a state of things was quite 'compatible with the security or, at least, 'the enjoyment of property' (vol. ii., p. 527).

Such sarcasm was quite thrown away upon the Marquis of Ailsa; it might as well have been addressed to the Craig of that ilk.

To get a complete understanding of the progress of this question, Mr. Parker's volumes must be supplemented by Mr. Morley's *Life of Cobden*, and by the speeches of Mr. Villiers and Mr. Bright. But the more the times are studied the more will Peel, as a practical statesman and a man of judgment and devotion, stand head and shoulders above his contemporaries.

An able writer in a recent number of the *Quarterly Review* is indisposed to call Peel a great man because he lacked imagination and preferred to co-operate with Wellington and Sir James Graham than to bluster with Palmerston or hob-a-nob with Disraeli. It all depends upon your standard. What is a pound? In the

currency of Parliament and in the estimation of the country Peel was a great man.

In one respect only do I find myself like Mr. Goulburn 'in a peculiar society.' I (no doubt I am wrong) deeply regret the publication of the Disraeli letters. Magnanimity is so beautiful a thing that its essential privacy should be preserved as a noble family tradition even at the expense of the public. Had Peel chosen in 1846 to produce the letter of 1841, of the existence of which he gave Disraeli a pretty broad hint, nobody could have complained and Disraeli could have replied. Peel did not do so, and what he, magnanimously, in the heat of conflict, and in the face of insult, forbore from doing, Mr. Parker does in 1899. It is of the essence of magnanimity that it should be complete and eternal. Unless it is that it is no magnanimity at all. To suppress a document for fifty years and until the man who wrote it is dead is no kindness. No good has been done by publication. For a couple of days the Tadpoles and the Tapers, that breed of curs, ran about sniffing and snuffing over the letters; the young lions of the press roared over them, rejoicing that their client, the public, should be let behind the

scenes. But the many-headed Beast is not nearly so big a fool as those who cater for his capacious maw would often have us believe. The many-headed knows its Disraeli perfectly well, and how he never pretended to be a man of nicety. He ate his peck of dirt and achieved his measure of dignity. In the vulgar struggle for existence Disraeli did some mean and shabby things; the letter of 1841 was perhaps one of them, the denial of it in 1846 was perhaps another, but a mean and shabby man Disraeli was not, and his reputation, such as it is, stands just where it did before these disclosures. The two letters are out of place in these stately memorials of a saviour of society. They jar upon you like a vulgar word scribbled on the pedestal of a noble statue. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day made his annual reference to the rise in the value of our shares in the Suez Canal, never were the cheers louder. Disraeli, too, had his day; and though, for my part, I would as soon think of coupling Dr. Johnson with Jacques Casanova as Peel with Disraeli, I can still, remembering all the differences in the circumstances of the two men, find room

for a regret that these memoirs should be made the vehicle of seeking to cast an unnecessary slur upon the memory of a man who, when all is said and done, will remain the author of the finest literary tribute to the character of Peel ever likely to be written.

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